

Fostering Constructive Intercultural Supervisory Working Alliances in Music
Therapy Internships Through Music Improvisation: A Qualitative Interview Study

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ABSTRACT

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Music improvisation is often used in music therapy to enhance the therapeutic working alliance between music therapists and clients. However, little is known about how music improvisation might be used to enhance the supervisory working alliance (SWA) between music therapy internship supervisors and interns, particularly within intercultural supervisory relationships. The purpose of this qualitative research interview study was to explore the perspectives of three music therapy internship supervisors on using music improvisation as a means of fostering a constructive intercultural SWA with interns. Individual qualitative interviews were conducted with three anglophone music therapy internship supervisors based in Canada who had supervised interns whose primary language was not English. The interviews were transcribed and individual narrative summaries created. These were analyzed using content analysis techniques wherein themes emerged within three predetermined categories: (a) the use of improvisation as an integrative component of the supervisory approach, (b) potential/unique benefits of using improvisation in supervision to foster a constructive intercultural SWA, and (c) potential/unique challenges in using music improvisation to foster a constructive intercultural SWA. The discussion contains reflections on the research process and findings, limitations of the study, implications for intercultural preprofessional music therapy and supervisory training, and recommendations for future research. This study provides supervisors, educators, and interns with valuable perspectives on how music improvisation can enhance intercultural SWAs within preprofessional music therapy training contexts.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Significance and Need

Preprofessional supervision is essential in many helping professions, particularly those that fall under the umbrella of counselling therapies, including music therapy. Supervision involves a collaborative relationship where a qualified professional mentors an intern in developing the necessary skills to meet professional standards (Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association, 2020). Establishing and maintaining a strong supervisory working alliance (SWA) plays a crucial role in enhancing an intern's learning experience (Basa, 2017). Research suggests that a well developed SWA not only improves client outcomes but also boosts an intern's self-efficacy, job satisfaction, skill development, and professional resilience (Basa, 2017; Kirk, 2014; Watkins, 2014). These benefits can extend well into interns' professional careers, shaping their future effectiveness as both a practitioner and a supervisor (Kirk, 2014; Watkins, 2014).

The SWA can be challenged in various ways, especially in intercultural contexts where supervisors and interns come from different cultural backgrounds and perhaps also speak different first languages (Al-Nasa'h & Moore, 2014; Fuertes, 2004; Garrison et al., 2022; Hernandez, n.d.; Wilson et al., 2023). These challenges may include cultural misunderstandings, differing communication styles, pedagogical expectations, and varying perceptions of hierarchy which may hinder goal setting, role clarity, and cause reluctance to engage in supervision (Al-Nasa'h & Moore, 2014; Dimitrov et al., 2014; Nilsson & Anderson, 2004; Tummala-Narra, 2004; Winchester-Seeto et al., 2013). Garrison et al. (2022) considered these challenges by examining helpful and hindering supervisory events from the perspectives of international psychology counselling students. They found that supervisors who displayed defensiveness, disengagement, and disregard of interns' cultural experiences were perceived as creating hindering events in the intercultural supervisory relationship that negatively impacted the SWA. Events were perceived as helpful when supervisors responded with curiosity and humility to openly discuss the interns' nuanced cultural experiences (Garrison et al., 2022).

Music therapy, like other counselling-related fields, has established parameters for preprofessional training (Canadian Association of Music Therapists [CAMT], n.d.-a). To become a certified music therapist (MTA) in Canada, students must complete

university coursework within a recognized program along with approximately 1200 hours of supervised practicum and internship training (CAMT, n.d.-a). During this time, they receive supervision from one or more certified music therapy supervisors to help them achieve entry-level professional competencies prior to writing the board certification exam (CAMT, 2016).

Intercultural music therapy supervision relationships may face challenges that affect the SWA similar to those noted above. Other challenges noted specifically in the music therapy literature include friction in the supervisory relationship emerging or being revealed through the way supervisors and supervisees make music together, potentially influencing co-led sessions and impacting client outcomes (Kim, 2008). Unresolved conflicts in an intercultural music therapy supervisory relationship may also affect interns' confidence as a musician and their relationship with music, possibly impacting their clinical effectiveness and professional longevity as future music therapists (Kim, 2008; Turry, 2019).

Music therapists use interactive music experiences (e.g., instrument playing, music and movement, vocal work, etc.) as a means of building strong therapeutic working alliances with clients (Bruscia, 2014). Furthermore, various scholars have noted the inherent potential that music making, and music improvisation specifically, holds as a nonverbal means of communication or dialogue (Bruscia, 2014; Lee & Khare, 2019; Malloch & Trevarthen, 2009). Therefore, it seems logical to conclude that integrating music experiences into preprofessional intercultural music therapy supervision contexts may also hold unique potential to help foster strong SWAs.

Although music skills are listed as a required area of professional competency in music therapy (CAMT, 2016), surprisingly, there are scant publications that address the integration of music making into music therapy supervision contexts at large (i.e., preprofessional and professional). These include teaching musical skills to meet professional competencies (CAMT, 2016) and clinical role play that integrates music improvisation (Scheiby, 2019; Turry, 2019). Music-centered music therapy supervision models use music, including improvisation, as the primary mode to facilitate the supervision process (Lee & Khare, 2019). This may include improvising to process clinical material (Scheiby, 2019), release built up tensions from sessions (Scheiby, 2019),

and gain self-awareness of underlying motivations, assumptions, and needs revealed in one's improvisation (Turry, 2019).

I found only one publication where music improvisation was used to enhance equity and ease when working through clinical challenges within intercultural supervisory relationships; including with interns whose first language was different than that of their anglophone supervisors. In this case, music improvisation was used as an initial means of processing, followed by verbal processing to deepen self-awareness and insight. (Sutton & De Backer, 2014). More specific details pertaining to this study will be reviewed in Chapter 2.

Finally, it is relevant to note that in Canada, and elsewhere, music therapy clinicians, researchers, and educators are actively working toward creating a more inclusive and diverse profession—one that better reflects the diversity of clients served, or could be served, in ways that are culturally sensitive and accessible (Brault et al., 2025; Kirkland, 2002). Given the current and anticipated increasing diversity within the music therapy profession, it is essential to identify and better understand relevant and accessible strategies that will aid in fostering strong SWAs within intercultural music therapy internship supervision (Kim, 2008; Young, 2009). The present study aimed to take preliminary steps in addressing this need.

My Relationship to the Topic

Personal Connection

I was raised in multilingual Canadian contexts, speaking only Spanish for the first 4 years of my life. Soon after, I started speaking English and French at school, with English being the second language I learned. All my life, I have combined accents, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and cultural references. I believe that these diverse cultural and linguistic influences have also shaped the development of my intercultural relational skills. I usually feel quite comfortable engaging in both personal and professional relationships with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds that are different from my own.

Music has also offered me a nonverbal way to connect with others and express my thoughts and emotions in authentic ways. As a child, I spent hours exploring the sounds of my voice and improvising melodies on the piano. In hindsight, I believe this helped me

learn more about myself, which in turn has helped me relate to others from different cultural backgrounds than my own. For example, when travelling and doing humanitarian projects among Indigenous communities in India and Guatemala, I led music experiences, such as singing, dancing, and instrument playing, with local residents. Despite our social, economic, linguistic, ethnic, and national differences, music gave us a way to bond, connect, and build deep relationships without having to use words. These personal experiences of using music to foster intercultural connections aided me in the conceptualization of the present research inquiry.

Professional Connection

At the time of this study, I had been a certified music therapist for 6 years. I completed my undergraduate training in the United States and my graduate training in Canada, where I currently reside. Throughout my music therapy training, I had diverse supervision experiences in both countries with supervisors from different cultural backgrounds than my own. At the beginning of my undergraduate internship, I felt disoriented, overwhelmed, and confused about navigating cultural norms and standards of the internship site while trying to develop my own clinical identity. My supervisor had noticed my level of stress and broached it during a supervision conversation, but I did not know how to verbalize what I was feeling because I was afraid of appearing incompetent. My internship supervisors came from different ethnic backgrounds and had different first languages than I, which, in retrospect, may have influenced my comfort level in communicating how I felt.

During this time, one of my supervisors, who also did not identify English as a first language, invited me to engage with him in music improvisation for the purpose of getting to know each other. I played the piano and he played the guitar, and afterwards, he commented on my tendency to follow a repetitive chord structure. While processing the improvisation with my supervisor, I realized that my repetitive playing revealed my underlying fears as a developing therapist. Though other supervisors had attempted to talk about this topic with me in supervision, it was not until I engaged in this improvisation that I opened up more and realized how I was truly feeling. This level of enhanced insight and self-awareness helped me confront personal challenges, clarify learning goals, and build a stronger connection with my supervisor.

Since becoming certified in 2019, I have supervised six music therapy interns who did not speak English as their first language. I noticed that some seemed hesitant to seek help or ask questions during supervision—which was held in English. To address this, I introduced music improvisation into supervision sessions, using experiential techniques to explore clinical dynamics. On one occasion, an intern and I had been co-leading sessions with a child who tended to run around the room and randomly play many instruments. While I was working to engage the client in music making, the intern was hesitant, not joining us until I verbally prompted her to do so. In supervision, rather than discussing strategies she might use, I designed a role-play music improvisation experience. I asked the intern to support me on the piano as I ran around the room playing every instrument in sight. Although hesitant at first, she eventually joined in, laughing—displaying a visible moment of ease.

This intern and I had many cultural differences including our nationalities, ethnicities, and first languages. However, I felt that music improvisation gave us a shared forum within which we could relate to one another, and this sparked a meaningful conversation which had not happened previously in verbally focused supervision sessions. Music improvisation deepened our communication, connection, and collaboration (i.e., fostered our SWA), which in turn gave the intern more confidence in facilitating sessions. My preprofessional and professional experiences of how music can foster SWAs within intercultural music therapy supervision contexts aided me in the conceptualization of the present research inquiry.

Purpose Statement

Literature indicates that the SWA may be compromised by challenges that can arise in preprofessional intercultural supervisory relationships. Although music improvisation holds promise as a means of addressing these challenges and/or as a means of fostering a constructive SWA within music therapy internship supervision, very little has been written on this topic. It could be the case that supervisors are using music improvisation for this purpose and not writing about it and/or could benefit from further reflection on this topic. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the perspectives of three anglophone Canadian-based music therapy supervisors on using improvisation to foster constructive intercultural SWAs with interns whose first language

is not English. My hope was that this research would address gaps in knowledge, identify areas for further study, and enhance supervision practices.

Research Questions

This study's primary research question was: What are the perspectives of three Canadian-based anglophone music therapy internship supervisors on using music improvisation as a means of fostering a constructive intercultural SWA with music therapy interns whose primary language is not English?¹ The subsidiary questions were (a) Do these music therapy internship supervisor participants use music improvisation as an integrated component of their preprofessional supervisory approach? If so, why and how? If not, why not? (b) What potential/unique benefits do these supervisors describe that support the use of music improvisation as a means of fostering a constructive intercultural SWA with interns whose primary language is not English? (c) What potential/unique challenges do these supervisors describe when using music improvisation as a means of fostering a constructive intercultural SWA with interns whose primary language is not English?

Key Terms

Key terms contained in the research questions are defined below. Other notable terms are defined in context as they occur throughout the paper.

Anglophone is a term referring to someone who speaks English and considers it to be their first language or their most fluent language. It is the language that they use most frequently to speak, read, write, and think (Noakes, 2023).

In Canada, a *music therapy internship supervisor* is an individual who has at least two years, or 1500 client contact hours, of clinical experience after becoming a certified music therapist (MTA). They have also completed the level one supervisor training offered by the CAMT or have undergone a grandparenting process to become a CAMT approved internship supervisor (CAMT, n.d.-a).

¹ Because intercultural supervisory relationships can be defined using various parameters, language difference was emphasized to highlight clear/obvious cultural differences between the supervisor and the intern. This study did investigate language per se but the main focus was to highlight the potential for cross cultural miscommunications/misunderstandings.

Music improvisation occurs when an individual spontaneously creates new music as they play, sing, or extemporize a melody, rhythm, song, or instrumental excerpt. Improvisation can occur independently or with others in a duet or group (Bruscia, 2014).

Intercultural describes interactions and relationships among individuals of different cultural backgrounds resulting in the mutual exchange of ideas. As a result, each person involved learns from each other and changes in one way or another, meaning that no one stays the same after this kind of interaction (Cambridge University Press, n.d.; Schriefer, 2016).

The *supervisory working alliance* (SWA) is the formal relationship between a supervisor and an intern which drives supervisory collaboration and change in supervision. A constructive alliance is characterized by agreement on goals and tasks of supervision and a bond of trust between the two individuals (Basa, 2017).

A *music therapy intern* is a student (preprofessional) undergoing music therapy clinical training at the undergraduate or graduate level and has yet to become a certified professional (MTA in Canada) (CAMT, n.d.-a).

Summary of Chapters

This thesis contains five chapters. Chapter 1 addressed the significance of my topic and need for the research. I discussed my relationship to the topic, stated the study's purpose, presented research questions, and defined key terms. Next, Chapter 2 provides a review of related literature divided into the following sections: (a) preprofessional supervision in counselling therapies, (b) preprofessional supervision in Canadian music therapy contexts, and (c) applications of music improvisation in music therapy supervision. In Chapter 3, I detail my study's methodology, including design, participants, ethical considerations, material, data collection, and data analysis procedures. Chapter 4 summarizes the study's findings. Finally, in Chapter 5, I discuss my reflections on the findings and research process, limitations of the study, implications, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to explore current literature relevant to this research and summarize what is known and not known about the topics contained within the parameters of this study. The first section discusses preprofessional supervision within counselling-related professions in general. It also reviews the supervisory working alliance (SWA) and potential challenges to maintaining a constructive SWA, with a focus on those that emerge in intercultural contexts. The second section focuses on describing preprofessional supervision in Canadian music therapy contexts and reviews issues relevant to the SWA and intercultural supervisory practices within these contexts. Finally, the third section reviews applications of music improvisation within music therapy supervision contexts, including those involving intercultural supervisory relationships.

Preprofessional Supervision in Counselling Therapies

As stated in Chapter 1, preprofessional supervision is a formal relationship between a professional and a trainee (Collins Dictionary, n.d.; Merriam-Webster, n.d.). The relationship includes mentorship, guidance, leadership, teaching, and ensuring quality of services (Health and Care Professions Council, n.d.; Work Safe BC, 2011; World Health Organization, n.d.). The supervisor's primary goal is to support the intern's professional development in alignment with their stage of training. Interns work towards professional competencies in their field to ensure readiness to practice independently (Farnan et al., 2012; Martin et al., 2017).

Supervision is characterized by the unique relationship that exists between each supervisor and intern and can lead to establishing an SWA; a fundamental alliance in guiding interns to meet their learning goals (Kirk, 2014; Watkins, 2014). The SWA consists of three main components: (a) mutually agreed upon goals, (b) assigned tasks and responsibilities to meet those goals, and (c) the bond between the supervisor and intern (Basa, 2017). A constructive SWA is characterized by collaboration, openness, communication, honesty, trust, self-awareness, mutual respect, and a balance of positive and constructive feedback (Basa, 2017; Bernard & Goodyear, 2013; Ellis et al., 2013; Enlow et al., 2019). A constructive SWA can help interns experience a high sense of self-efficacy, well-being, willingness to self-disclose, satisfaction in supervision and the workplace, and the skills necessary to be effective clinicians (Kirk, 2014; Watkins, 2014).

Like any relationship, the supervisory relationship can experience challenges, making rupture and repair a natural, and important, part of the development and maintenance of the SWA (Enlow et al., 2019; Kirk, 2014). Challenges can include difficulty receiving or delivering constructive criticism, avoiding topics of concern, power struggles, and miscommunication (Ellis et al., 2013; Enlow et al., 2019; Kirk, 2014). If not addressed, these challenges can cause lasting negative impacts on the intern. These effects can include performance anxiety, difficulties in meeting learning goals, longevity in the profession, and may have a negative impact on the quality of clinical intervention for clients (Ellis et al., 2013; Kirk, 2014; Kozina et al., 2010; Watkins, 2014).

Challenges in the supervisory relationship can have many causes, and one contributing factor may be the presence of cultural differences between the supervisor and supervisee (Amery et al., 2020; Gardner, 2002; Tummala-Narra, 2004). In Canada, cultural diversity among university counseling students is growing significantly, with an increasing number of supervisors overseeing interns who have different cultural backgrounds than their own, which often also includes speaking a different language (Amery et al., 2020). This diversity can lead to cultural dissonance in the supervisory relationship, caused by such things as varying perceptions of power and/or expectations, timeliness of task completion, and preferences in the way constructive feedback is communicated (Dimitrov et al., 2014; Tummala-Narra, 2004; Winchester-Seeto et al., 2013).

Within intercultural supervision contexts, supervisors can take steps to proactively address the aforementioned challenges and in doing so, strengthen the SWA. One study examined growth-promoting factors in relationships with counselling student of different racial and ethnic backgrounds than their supervisors. The researcher found that supervisors who initiated talking about cultural differences, strengthened the supervisory bond and helped interns feel more comfortable in asking for help when needed (Gardner, 2002). Another study investigated how graduate supervisors and supervisees viewed the role of intercultural competence in intercultural supervisory relationships. They discovered that when supervisors displayed cultural responsiveness, they could more easily extend empathy and understand/value unique perspectives, helping to mitigate

power imbalances in the relationship (Amery et al., 2020). Cumulatively, these studies indicate that supervisors play crucial factors in navigating challenges in intercultural supervisory relationships, foundational components in building and maintaining a constructive SWA.

Preprofessional Supervision in Canadian Music Therapy Contexts

As in other counselling-related professions, preprofessional supervision is a crucial component within music therapy² training. According to the CAMT (n.d.-a), aspiring music therapists in Canada must complete a university degree in music therapy along with 1200 hours of supervised music therapy practicum and internship training before taking the board certification exam. Music therapy students receive supervision from one or more certified music therapy supervisors with whom they form preprofessional supervisory relationships. These relationships play a key role in their professional development as they learn to merge theory and practice, gain insights into professional issues, and refine their skills through supervision and feedback (CAMT, n.d.-a; Clements-Cortes, 2015; Forinash, 2019).

At the time of this study, the CAMT recognized six universities who are eligible to offer preprofessional music therapy training in Canada, each with varying formats of incorporating the cumulative 1200-hour internship/practica training. While there may be differences among these programs, all are required to ensure that their curricula address the entry level professional competencies established by CAMT (2016). Undergraduate music therapy students at Acadia University (n.d.), Canadian Mennonite University (CMU; 2024), Capilano University (n.d.), and Wilfrid Laurier University (n.d.-a) must complete all their degree coursework and a small number of supervised practicum hours (approximately 200) before completing a 1000 hour supervised internship. Acadia and CMU also have certificate/after degree options where the 1000-hour supervised internship occurs after all coursework and practica have been completed. Concordia University (n.d.) offers a graduate diploma in music therapy where all the coursework and practicum/internship hours are completed concurrently over a 12-month period.

² The CAMT (2020) defines music therapy as a “discipline in which Certified Music Therapists (MTAs) use music purposefully within therapeutic relationships to support development, health, and well-being...[and] use [it] safely and ethically to address human needs within cognitive, communicative, emotional, musical, physical, social, and spiritual domains” (What is music therapy? section, para. 1)

Finally, Wilfrid Laurier University (n.d.-b) and the University of Toronto (n.d.) offer a two-year master's program in music therapy or applied music and health (respectively) with both programs integrating the practicum/internship hours required for certification throughout their program's duration.

While more research and scholarly literature is needed, a few publications address issues relevant to intercultural music therapy internship supervision in Canadian contexts. Kirkland (2002) stated that there are increasingly more music therapists in Canada of diverse ethnic backgrounds than in past decades, implying an increase of diversity among music therapy interns. Young (2009) conducted a survey among supervisors in Canada and the United States and discovered that most of the participants had supervised interns of a different ethnic/racial background than their own, though the supervisors had received minimal or no training in multicultural music therapy. Most supervisors did not talk about cultural issues with interns often but when they did, they occurred more frequently with interns of majority ethnic groups than minority ones (Young, 2009). Lastly, Clements-Cortes (2015) conducted a survey among interns in Canada who were fluent in English and found that interns expressed having minimal counselling skills and being fearful of what to say when working with adult clients. Though it is unknown if the participants identified English as a second language, one could assume that this might be even more challenging for interns whose first language is not English (Al-Nasa'h & Moore, 2014).

Applications of Music Improvisation in Music Therapy Supervision

Some music therapy scholars indicate that music making should be considered as a vital component of music therapy supervision because experiences of engaging in music are central to how music functions in music therapy clinical contexts (Lee & Khare, 2019; Sutton & De Backer, 2014; Turry, 2019). As noted in Chapter 1, a few publications have highlighted various ways in which music has been applied in music therapy supervision contexts. The present study focused on music improvisation specifically, because of its unique potential to foster SWAs in intercultural music therapy internship supervision contexts.

Music improvisation (defined in Chapter 1) is one of the main overarching methods that music therapists use with clients to facilitate communication, self-

expression, emotional processing, and deepened awareness of conscious and subconscious material (Bruscia, 2014). It can enhance the therapeutic working alliance between client and therapist through bonding, shared experience, and expression (Lee & Khare, 2019; Turry, 2019; Young & Aigen, 2010). The CAMT professional competencies indicate that music therapists must be able to “improvise in a variety of musical styles” (CAMT, 2016, Section 3.1) and music improvisation may be incorporated as part of a music therapy assessment process (CAMT, 2016). At the very least, it seems that practical improvisation competencies (i.e., skills) should be addressed in preprofessional music therapy supervision (Sutton & De Backer, 2014).

Beyond improvisation competency development, music improvisation can serve various functions in music therapy supervision. According to Young and Aigen (2010), music improvisation can also be used in supervision to: (a) explore transference and countertransference, (b) strengthen the supervisory relationship, (c) support the supervision process, and (d) enhance personal and professional development by connecting to music. Music improvisation can be used as a forum within which to role-play clinical situations and as a means of processing supervision topics experientially (Scheiby, 2019; Turry, 2019). However, the extent to which improvisation is incorporated in supervision largely depends on the supervisor’s training and theoretical orientation (Lee & Khare, 2019). For example, in Analytical Music Therapy³ a combination of music improvisation and verbal processing may be used in supervision to process conscious and unconscious material, transference and countertransference, parallel processes, and release any built-up tension from sessions (Scheiby, 2019). In Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy⁴ music improvisation may be used in supervision to build musical intuition and intentionality, learn how to interact with clients musically, and gain self-awareness of one’s motivations, assumptions, and needs by examining one’s own music making (Turry, 2019).

³Analytical Music Therapy (AMT) is a specific music psychotherapy model that uses music making and verbal processing to analyze clinical material. This model can be applied in music therapy sessions and supervision (Scheiby, 2019).

⁴ Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy is a music therapy model that uses musical processes as the main agent of change. It is a type of music-centered therapy that believes that engaging in music can lead to personal growth (Turry, 2019).

Music Improvisation in Intercultural Music Therapy Supervision

While the topic is not comprehensively addressed in the literature, some publications do suggest that within intercultural music therapy supervision contexts, music improvisation holds potential to strengthen the SWA in various ways. Improvisation provides a space wherein musical influences from diverse cultures can be acknowledged, celebrated, and appreciated (Turry, 2019). It can also heighten awareness of cultural differences, assumptions, and potential cultural misunderstandings, that have otherwise would have remained unaddressed (Sutton de Backer, 2014; Turry, 2019). Improvisation can deepen insight, making ideas more tangible. It can offer opportunities to discuss cultural differences and enhance cultural reflexivity in supervision contexts (Turry, 2019).

Improvisation also provides opportunities for supervisors and interns to improvise outside of their own musical cultures and, while this can sometimes be uncomfortable, cross-cultural improvisation can also be empowering and lead to personal and professional growth (Lee & Khare, 2019; Turry, 2019). By engaging in music improvisation in supervision, interns and supervisors can learn more about each other and build a positive supervisory relationship (Turry, 2019; Young & Aigen, 2010). These benefits are helpful in supervisory relationships at large, but particularly important within intercultural supervisory relationships where supervisors and interns may find it harder to relate to one another and bond (Kim, 2008).

I found one particularly salient example from the literature where music improvisation was applied within an intercultural music therapy supervision context. Sutton and De Backer (2014) interviewed experienced music therapy supervisors in the United Kingdom and Belgium on their use of music in supervision. One of the English-speaking research participants indicated how they maintained a practice of improvising musically with interns whose first language was not English as a means of processing clinical situations. After these improvisations, the supervisor would take an active role in guiding interns' verbal processing of the experiences in English as a means of providing them with concrete language to describe their musical improvisation. The supervisor felt that this process helped interns to use both verbal language and music to gain awareness,

insight, and embodiment of conscious and unconscious information, and that it also strengthened the supervisory relationship (i.e., the SWA) (Sutton & De Backer, 2014).

Finally, it is relevant to note that the literature highlights some challenges to incorporating music improvisation into preprofessional music therapy supervision. Interns have a specific time frame to meet a wide range of professional competencies, which may be increasingly challenging if they face difficulties with proficiency in the language in which they are working (Kim, 2008; Mori, 2021). Some supervisors may feel that there is insufficient time to engage in improvisation supervisory processes that go beyond foundational competency development (Eyre, 2019; Rushing et al., 2019; Sutton & De Backer, 2014). It could also be the case that other competencies or topics of conversation hold a higher priority depending on the phase of internship and the needs of the intern (Eyre, 2019; Feiner, 2019). Some supervisors may not feel confident in their own music improvisation skills (Lee & Khare, 2019; Sutton & De Backer, 2014) and as such, it is difficult for them to incorporate improvisation into supervision (Turry, 2019). Turry (2019) noted that the spontaneous aspects of music improvisation can sometimes be a source of anxiety and feel threatening and intimidating for both supervisors and interns. This may further complicate the development of a strong SWA in situations where the supervisor and the intern are also navigating cultural differences and/or communication/language challenges (Kim, 2008).

In spite of these challenges, some literature indicates that music improvisation holds promise as a means of fostering a constructive SWA within music therapy internship supervision contexts (as outlined above). However, a limited amount has been written on this topic specifically and gaps in knowledge exist, which reiterates the need for the present research. The following chapter outlines how a qualitative interview methodology was conceptualized for this study.

Chapter 3. Methodology

Design

In this study, I employed a qualitative interview design (Hounshell, 2022) to examine the perspectives of three anglophone music therapy internship supervisors in Canada on using music improvisation as a means of fostering a constructive intercultural SWA with music therapy interns whose primary language is not English. The results of this study were not meant to be generalizable; rather, they described individuals' perspectives on the topic through the creation of narratives. Practical and theoretical implications were revealed through a cross-case analysis of these narratives using directed content analysis techniques that resulted in emergent themes contained within predetermined categories (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Ghetti & Keith, 2016; Siegle, 2023).

Delimitations

To focus the scope of this study and complete it within the timeline of a master's thesis, some delimitations were imposed. This study was limited to three participants who were interviewed individually for a maximum of 1 hour each.

Participants

This study received approval from the Concordia University Human Research Ethics Committee (UHREC) before recruitment or data collection began (Appendix A). Recruitment information was shared in a letter (Appendix B) via the CAMT website, music therapy provincial and regional association newsletters, and by emailing supervisors in my thesis supervisor's professional network. Eligible participants had to fulfill the following criteria: (a) be an MTA in good standing, (b) have completed the CAMT Level 1 supervision training required to become an internship supervisor (CAMT, n.d.-b), (c) have at least 5 years of experience providing preprofessional music therapy internship supervision as the main/primary MTA supervisor (i.e., the supervisor who completes the intern's final CAMT internship evaluation), (d) identify English as their primary language, (e) have supervised at least one music therapy intern whose primary language was not English, and (f) have either used music improvisation in internship supervision (even minimally) and/or would be open to using music improvisation in internship supervision.

After approximately five months of recruitment efforts, I had interviewed two participants and was having difficulty finding a third participant, so I submitted an ethics amendment to the Concordia UHREC regarding eligibility criteria and recruitment methods. The approved amendments enabled me to recruit participants through social media posts on LinkedIn and Facebook using a revised letter on a Google Drive link (Appendix C). The eligibility criteria were expanded to also include: (a) former MTAs who previously practised music therapy and supervised in Canada, but currently did not reside in Canada, and (b) supervisors who became approved CAMT supervisors through a grandparenting process. These amendments were approved, and a new certificate of approval was issued (see Appendix D). The first three participants who met the eligibility criteria, provided informed consent, completed the interview, and did not withdraw from the study within the two weeks after the interview were included in the study. Participants signed the relevant consent form (Appendices E and F) using electronic signatures and emailed them to me. Individuals were not compensated for their participation.

Ethical Considerations

Participants were informed regarding issues pertaining to confidentiality, potential risks and benefits of participation, and their right to withdraw on the consent forms (Appendices E and F). Because the music therapy community in Canada is relatively small, I was professionally familiar with some of the participants. However, the topics discussed were not likely to cause significant distress and care was taken to ensure that identities within situations discussed were not revealed to me. I also encouraged all the participants to answer the interview questions honestly, share only what they felt comfortable sharing, and to not attempt to give me what they perceived as *good* results. Participants were reminded they could also contact my advisor if they had any concerns or questions and that they could withdraw at any time during the interview without penalty. I also emailed an encrypted version of the transcripts to the participants within 10 business days of each interview. Participants then had 10 business days to review their transcript and make desired revisions. During this time, they could also withdraw from the study if they wished. All the participants chose to make transcript revisions. They did so within the designated time frame and did not withdraw from the study.

Materials

I used a password-protected personal laptop to correspond with participants, conduct and record interviews, create transcripts, analyze data, and compile findings. Interviews were audio recorded on Zoom, with backup recordings on QuickTime Player, all of which will be deleted 5 years after the interviews were conducted as stated in the consent forms (Appendices E and F). All files were saved on my password-protected personal laptop and backed up on a secondary hard drive stored in a locked storage container. Files were also saved on a tertiary hard drive as encrypted documents and stored securely in my home office.

Data Collection

Once participants provided informed consent, I arranged a time for each interview that was mutually convenient. I also emailed participants the interview guide and definition of key terms (Appendix G) before the interview. All three interviews followed a semi-structured format and were held from April to June 2025. Each interview was conducted in English via Zoom and lasted no more than 60 minutes.

Data Analysis

I edited automatically generated interview transcripts and saved them as Microsoft Word documents. Two participants sent me a revised version of the transcript with minor rewording changes to enhance clarity of their responses and to further ensure anonymity. One participant chose not to review her transcript but during the interview, she verbally requested that I remove the name of a country from her transcript that could potentially compromise her anonymity.

Once the transcripts were finalized, I read each one multiple times and wrote summary notes, making links with the research questions. I then wrote a third-person narrative summary for each participant to describe their perspectives on using music improvisation as a means of fostering a constructive intercultural SWA with music therapy interns whose primary language was not English. I then analyzed the narratives by colour-coding phrases that corresponded to predetermined categories as per the subsidiary research questions. These categories included: (a) use of improvisation as an integrative component of the supervisory approach, (b) potential/unique benefits of using music improvisation in supervision to foster a constructive intercultural SWA, and (c)

potential/unique challenges of using music improvisation in supervision to foster a constructive intercultural SWA.

Subsequently, I reviewed the content in each category, grouped similar content into subgroups, and labelled each group as a theme. I evaluated the wording of the themes and reorganized them multiple times until I had a set of themes that I felt aligned with the categories and answered the research questions. Last, I used selective coding methods to extract quotes directly from the transcripts that corresponded, supported, and gave further credibility to each theme that had emerged (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Ghetti & Keith, 2016; Siegle, 2023).

In the next chapter, I present the results and provide relevant example quotes to illustrate each theme.

Chapter 4. Results

The primary research question of this study was: What are the perspectives of three Canadian-based anglophone music therapy internship supervisors on using music improvisation as a means of fostering a constructive intercultural SWA with music therapy interns whose primary language is not English? The subsidiary questions were: (a) Do these music therapy internship supervisor participants use music improvisation as an integrated component of their preprofessional supervisory approach? If so, why and how? If not, why not? (b) What potential/unique benefits do these supervisors describe that support the use of music improvisation as a means of fostering a constructive intercultural SWA with interns whose primary language is not English? (c) What potential challenges do these supervisors describe when using music improvisation as a means of fostering a constructive intercultural SWA with interns whose primary language is not English? To answer these questions, I conducted three individual interviews with music therapy supervisors who met the inclusion criteria described in Chapter 3. A narrative summary of each participant's interview is presented below using pseudonyms to ensure anonymity of the participants. This is followed by a cross-case analysis as described in Chapter 3.

Participants' Narrative Summaries

Participant 1: Alex

At the time of the interview, Alex had been a CAMT-approved music therapy supervisor for 17 years. She worked in a hospital setting, wherein she had supervised 10 interns, 6 of whom did not identify English as their first language.

Alex described her internship supervision approach as humanistic. She saw interns as peers, meaning that she viewed herself and each intern as equals, even though they held different roles in the supervisory relationship. She believed that growth was a result of collaboration and learning from each other. Following similar practices of her own internship supervisor, she prioritized collaborating with each intern to first determine their learning goals and then create a learning plan. Her orientation process included giving interns opportunities to observe music therapy sessions, shadow other professionals, and lead two sessions independently. Then, she would observe one of their

sessions and give them feedback. She believed in finding a balance between helping interns in their learning process while also giving them independence.

Alex believed a constructive SWA needed to include three key elements: (a) established goals, (b) clear communication and transparency, and (c) mutual respect. She noted that challenges to developing a constructive intercultural SWA could include the intern and supervisor having different values and expectations of how quality clinical work is realized. For instance, when supervising interns from cultures that value hierarchy and hold elders in high regard, she noticed that some had difficulty speaking up or being adequately assertive in supervision and in sessions with older clients. Some interns from diverse cultural backgrounds also indicated that they were experiencing stress due to pressure from their family to be *perfect* or follow a particular career path—such as being a doctor rather than being a musician. Becoming a music therapist was an attempt at finding a compromise between the interns' desires and those of their parents', whom they did not want to disappoint.

In these situations, Alex tried to talk openly and honestly with interns about their feelings, collaborate with them to work through their struggles, and be as flexible as possible. She empathized with them and acknowledged the pressure she had experienced when her personal values and identity evolved in ways that clashed with her Caucasian and Catholic religious and cultural upbringing. Alex went through her own process of challenging cultural norms she grew up with and felt strongly about the importance of speaking her mind. As such, she encourages interns to do the same for the purpose of professional and personal growth. However, she recognized that this may be difficult for interns from cultures where authority is seen as something to be respected rather than challenged.

Though Alex did not identify music improvisation as an integral part of her supervisory approach, she felt that improvisation had a place in supervision. She often engaged in making music with interns to work on musical techniques or competencies. Though she did not intentionally plan to engage with interns in improvisation during supervision, opportunities organically emerged—she estimated once a month although supervision sessions with her interns typically occurred at least once a week. Upon reflection, Alex indicated that using music improvisation in music therapy internship

supervision contexts could be helpful in numerous ways that were not specific to intercultural SWAs. Instead, it could be helpful to all interns regardless of their primary language or cultural background. She believed that improvisation could be used to enhance self-awareness, emotional exploration, communication, collaborative processing, and embrace being in the moment. It could also help interns cultivate creativity, let go of unrealistic expectations, seek growth rather than perfection, and feel what it is like to be a client in music therapy by using music for expression. She indicated that barriers to incorporating music improvisation in supervision included limitations of some interns' musical skills. Alex assumed that interns could hold insecurities about their improvisation skills, like the ones she had felt as an intern. She also felt that music improvisation could present challenges such as revealing personal struggles, emotional issues, and a fear of being judged by supervisors for improvisation skills that were not yet fully developed, causing interns to feel less willing to engage.

Alex suggested that improvisation could potentially help interns process challenging situations in a creative way which, in turn, could cultivate self-compassion and potentially reduce stress. She noted this could be especially relevant for interns from cultural backgrounds that strongly value high performance and achievement. Within some intercultural internship supervision contexts, Alex had supervised interns who had advanced classical music training and had difficulty improvising because of the rigidity of this type of training. She saw how incorporating improvisation in supervision might help these interns learn to play with more spontaneity and improve their musicianship. Alex shared that improvising with interns from different backgrounds deepened her understanding of their unique traditions and that this could foster a constructive intercultural SWA. At the same time, Alex acknowledged that improvisation might evoke discomfort by surfacing personal struggles or vulnerabilities related to cultural background. However, she viewed these challenges not as barriers but as opportunities for self-awareness and growth, products of a constructive SWA.

Participant 2: Lisa

At the time of the interview, Lisa had been a CAMT-approved supervisor for 20 years and had supervised interns in hospital and university contexts. She estimated that she had supervised at least 50 interns and that eight to ten of these individuals had not

identified English as their first language. She had provided supervision in various formats including in person, online, individually, and in group settings.

Lisa described her supervision approach as being centred around self-awareness, communication, and collaboration. She believed in the importance of empathizing with interns, understanding that they often face many life stressors that fall outside of the confines of their internship. She strived to be flexible and make reasonable accommodations to alleviate students' burdens wherever possible. Lisa's supervision approach was influenced by various models and approaches. She sometimes worked within a group analytic music therapy supervision model, where music improvisation is used intentionally to process conscious and unconscious material as well as deepen levels of insight and self-reflection (Ahonen-Eerikäinen, 2007). Lisa also drew from Stige's (2001) supervision approach of walking *barefoot*, where the supervisor is a blank canvas, and strives to let go of assumptions during supervision. Through self-reflection, she sought to enhance awareness of her own countertransference to minimize bias and gain deeper understanding of the interns' needs and challenges. Lastly, Lisa's supervision approach was influenced by a university teaching and learning training she completed. As a result of this training, she began to incorporate secure attachment theories into her supervision approach to help interns build confidence in the SWA, which in turn could help them feel more secure as clinicians. She aimed to create a culture of safety for interns by reframing mistakes as *graduated learning*, thereby enabling them to feel more comfortable about making mistakes and talking about them.

Lisa believed that a constructive SWA included discussion of client material, deepening insight, and application of concepts. This requires communication, transparency, investment, mutual trust, safety, empathy, humility, and openness from both the supervisor and intern to learn something new. In intercultural internship supervision contexts, Lisa believed that challenges could stem from systemic issues, which in turn could cause interns to feel inadequate or that they do not belong in the profession. She noticed how interns whose first language was not English sometimes received insensitive comments from others at their internship site, which could make them feel devalued and accentuate preexisting insecurities about their English abilities. Interns could feel discouraged and believe that being a proficient music therapist in an

English-speaking context was unreachable and unrealistic. She also noted that these interns may feel like that they could not truly be themselves out of fear of being judged or rejected.

While recalling these challenges, Lisa remembered a time when she had lived in a country where English was not the main language. She stated: “I know that feeling of frustration and overwhelm and that [somehow,] you’re not...good enough or you’ll never be good enough.” Lisa used this experience to empathize with interns and help them process and reframe potential insecurities around their cultural diversity and language proficiency. She explained to interns that with practice they could improve “their therapy-specific language.” Lisa would say: “It’s just developmental versus anything else about you” thereby reiterating that improving their clinical verbal communication was an achievable goal given time, practice, and experience. She also encouraged interns not to suppress their true selves but to express themselves authentically through music and emphasized their potential to make positive changes and be leaders in music therapy.

Lisa used music improvisation in supervision occasionally to develop musical skills, process clinical situations, and explore dynamics such as transference, countertransference, and role-play. She noted that time constraints often limited its integration, making it difficult to create a “safe enough” space for improvisation, especially when interns were working through complex feelings such as not fitting into the profession. For Lisa, improvisation offered both benefits and challenges in supervisory relationships that could impact the SWA. She saw it as a way to foster authentic interaction, deepen understanding between supervisors and interns, and create a safe environment to address issues such as clinical assumptions, systemic oppression, and tensions in the workplace. At the same time, she acknowledged that improvisation could evoke unproductive emotional distress, highlight insecurities about musical skills, or even trigger traumatic memories. Within intercultural supervisory relationships, Lisa believed improvisation could provide a less intimidating entry point for discussing cultural issues than verbal processing, particularly when interns faced inappropriate or hurtful comments in clinical contexts or struggled with added stressors, such as language barriers. She recognized that while improvisation might sometimes intensify stress if it reveals

unresolved issues for the intern, it could also serve as a powerful opportunity for growth and self-expression, helping interns resist pressure to hide their authentic identities.

Participant 3: Doris

At the time of the research interview, Doris had 21 years of experience as a CAMT-approved music therapy supervisor. She had supervised 12 interns while working at a hospital, one of whom did not identify English as her first language.

Doris explained that her supervision and clinical approaches were similar, where collaboration, meaning-centered and resource-oriented approaches, and humanism were central components. She valued getting to know her interns and finding common ground with them. She also created learning opportunities for interns to shadow, observe, and co-lead sessions, preparing them to eventually lead sessions independently. Doris emphasized communication, exploration, competency development, and giving in-the-moment feedback to maximize learning. She prioritized giving interns practical tips and resources to improve their clinical skills.

From Doris' perspective, developing a constructive SWA started with getting to know the interns' learning styles and needs. It was important to Doris for this to happen early in the internship so she could get a sense of how to address challenges that may arise later. Doris actively sought ways to dissolve differences in hierarchy through collaborative learning. Rather than taking on the role of the expert grading the intern, she used evaluations as checkpoints to gauge the intern's progress collaboratively. Other important elements for Doris included building rapport, open communication, authenticity, and helping interns feel comfortable to take risks and make mistakes. She implemented these elements by being transparent about her own learning process and modeling that being a music therapist is a lifelong process of growth, not about perfection.

Previously, Doris had faced some challenges when engaging in an intercultural supervisory relationship because of difficulties around constructive criticism. As she provided the intern with feedback on ways to improve, the intern responded with defensiveness. In retrospect, Doris considered that this could have been a result of external factors such as family pressures to do well in internship. The intern also had difficulties with spelling when documenting, though it was hard for Doris to determine if

this was caused by language proficiency or other reasons. Sometimes these occurrences left Doris feeling frustrated, inadvertently putting a strain on the supervisory relationship. She addressed these issues by finding different ways to explain concepts to this intern. However, Doris felt that this was not always successful. She said, “I seem to recall feeling like it just wasn’t going anywhere,” especially when not seeing significant changes after giving feedback.

Doris primarily relied on verbal processing in supervision and used improvisation only occasionally (i.e., once a month), often unintentionally while teaching musical competencies. Since many interns were already familiar with improvisation from their training, she encouraged them to also use precomposed music to broaden their musical skills, particularly because some clients often preferred familiar songs. Earlier in her career, Doris’ lack of confidence in her own improvisation limited its use, but as she began improvising more in clinical practice, she became more open to using it in supervision. She believed improvisation could help interns and supervisors get unstuck, gain new insights, and develop practical strategies for addressing clinical challenges. It could also allow them to revisit moments from sessions more directly than verbal processing alone. However, she noted that both supervisors’ and interns’ lack of confidence in improvisation could make it feel intimidating and less effective than verbal processing, creating a barrier to using improvisation more frequently.

In intercultural supervision contexts, Doris saw improvisation as a way to promote equity in communication. For example, rather than depending on verbal language, communication could happen through improvisation. Assuming that the intern and supervisor’s improvisation skills were similar, communicating through music could potentially leveling out any power differentials within intercultural supervisory relationship caused by language proficiency. On the other hand, improvisation could also reveal interns’ and supervisors’ underlying insecurities about using music improvisation. Doris compared this to the challenges someone might experience when using their nondominant language to express themselves and communicate. Though improvisation could exacerbate these insecurities and create friction, it could also enrich the supervisory relationship by helping interns get out of their comfort zone and grow.

Cross-Case Analysis

I analyzed the narratives using content analysis techniques and organized them within predetermined categories based on the subsidiary research questions (as described in Chapter 3), allowing themes to emerge within these categories. Table 1 provides an overview of these categories and themes. Next, I provide descriptions of each theme, summarizing similarities and differences among participants' experiences. Cumulatively, this information aims to answer the primary research question presented above.

Table 1

Categories and Themes

Category	Theme
1. Use of improvisation as an integrated component of the supervisory approach	a. How supervisors integrate music into preprofessional supervision b. Why supervisors integrate music improvisation into preprofessional supervision c. Barriers to integrating music improvisation into preprofessional supervision
2. Potential/unique benefits of using improvisation in supervision to foster a constructive intercultural SWA	a. Enhanced communication b. Enhance introspection and extrospection c. Improved learning
3. Potential/unique challenges of using improvisation in supervision to foster a constructive intercultural SWA	a. Limited improvisation skills b. Supervisors' perception of improvisation's potential to elicit counterproductive discomfort c. Exacerbated challenges in internship

Category 1: Use of Music Improvisation as an Integrated Component of the Supervisory Approach

Theme 1a: How Supervisors Integrate Music into Preprofessional Supervision

All participants used music improvisation in supervision with interns but to greater or lesser degrees. Only Lisa used it to process “conscious and unconscious material” by playing music and talking about it afterwards. Alex and Doris did not identify improvisation as a core integrated component of their supervision approach. They both stated that improvisation sometimes occurred spontaneously while addressing a musical skill in supervision. Intentionally integrating improvisation as a core component of supervision seemed like a novel idea to Alex given her remark: “when I read your [interview guide], I was like, ‘huh, that’s a cool idea.’” She shared that improvisation was emphasized less in her preprofessional training compared to some current preprofessional music therapy programs in Canada, explaining why she had not thought of intentionally integrating it into her supervision practice up until now.

Doris did not integrate improvisation as a core component of internship supervision because “improvisation was not at the forefront of the approach that was presented when [she] was in school.” She reflected, “many of the years I was supervising, the clients [were] very much drawn to precomposed music,” which she indicated was another reason she focused on the use of familiar songs rather than improvisation in supervision. Last, many of Doris’s interns came from music therapy programs that emphasized improvisation. She said, “I...wonder, upon reflection, if it almost created a little bit of a resistance for me to actually [use] improvisation in the context of supervision,” perhaps implying she could have had a more balanced approach between integrating improvisation and precomposed music into her interns’ supervision sessions.

All three participants stated that they used music improvisation approximately once a month in supervision, though they were open to using it more often. Even Lisa, who purposefully aimed to integrate improvisation into her supervision approach, stated that improvisation did not happen often due to a lack of time. Lisa also noted, “We’re so stuck in the processing and thinking that we don’t embody what we’re doing” when processing situations in supervision, though improvisation offers that opportunity.

Doris stated that improvisation overall has always “sound[ed] a little daunting to [her].” This feeling discouraged her from incorporating improvisation into supervision with her interns more regularly. In contrast, Alex did not express feeling uncomfortable with improvisation, remarking that she and interns “play music all the time.” She remarked however that she did not say, “Now it’s time for improv” during supervision, meaning that improvisation is something that happened organically when she supervised interns and was not pre-planned.

Theme 1b: Why Supervisors Integrate Music Improvisation into Preprofessional Supervision

All three participants used music improvisation within internship supervision contexts to practice musical skills/competencies. Doris said that she used improvisation in supervision sessions with interns to “introduc[e] a skill or a potential way to use music in improvisation” with clients. Similarly, Alex recalled that improvisation emerged from moments in supervision when she and her interns were playing music together. She commented if she and the intern were practicing “hand drum technique...that can turn into improv just by accident.” Lisa also used improvisation in supervision to teach musical competencies but also as an entry point to build musical confidence. She said, “Usually, I start with...just trying out some things.... When [interns] are gaining confidence, ...[I] start to offer... one or two things that make [the improvisation] sound really cool and competent.” She also indicated that an initial focus on music improvisation competencies could organically lead to role play and processing clinical situations through improvisation. Here, the intern “choos[es] who is the therapist [and] who is the client.” After playing music, Lisa and the intern verbally process the experience to “understand...what’s happened within that improvisation, or to learn about assumptions [the intern is] making about the client” to be more effective in sessions.

Theme 1c: Barriers to Integrating Music Improvisation into Preprofessional Supervision

Both Alex and Lisa reflected that interns may feel insecure about their improvisation skills, thus serving as a barrier to integrating improvisation into supervision. Alex said, “If I were to imagine...my supervisor ask[ing] me to improvise, [I’m] going to be wondering what they think.” Interns could feel worried that their

supervisor is judging their improvisation skills rather than being present in the moment when improvising. Lisa recalled that she had perceived her internship supervisor as a highly skilled musician, which caused her to feel intimidated. She thought her interns might feel similarly: “No less than I felt when I was training.... Where you have this...person, [your supervisor] you think is...beyond you ever musically.” This perception could discourage interns from fully expressing themselves and being present when improvising in supervision.

Doris indicated that barriers could include limited improvisation skills of both the intern and the supervisor. She said, I “worry about the interns’ musical skills and [my] own as a supervisor...I’ve always felt worried [that my] own musical skills...might not be sufficient to use...in...supervision.” Music improvisation was not emphasized in Doris’ preprofessional training, which discouraged her from using it clinically over her professional career. Doris explained, “improvisation isn’t something that I used a lot, even clinically for many, many years. I would use it a little bit, but it wasn’t the predominant way in which I practiced.” This, in addition to a lack of confidence she felt when improvising, became barriers to using it more often with interns in supervision.

Lisa also explained that it takes time for interns to feel comfortable in expressing themselves through improvisation, especially if they are not used to it. Expressing oneself through improvisation “will not feel good for a long time,” as it takes practice and time, making it difficult to implement frequently especially when there is insufficient time available within the internship. Ideally, Lisa believed that improvisation should occur during the orientation phase, as a means for interns and supervisors to get to know each other. However, she stated, “It’s so much work to get them oriented and ready to do the work...that I think we get kind of stuck and we don’t bring in the music fast enough.” She believed that if music improvisation is introduced early on in supervision, it is more likely to become a norm and an integrated component of supervision.

Category 2: Potential/Unique Benefits of Using Improvisation in Supervision to Foster a Constructive Intercultural SWA

Theme 2a: Enhanced Communication

All the participants believed that improvisation could enhance communication in supervision which in turn would help to foster a constructive SWA; with some benefits

being specific to intercultural preprofessional supervisory relationships. Doris suggested that improvisation could offer an alternative “language tool,” especially between interns whose first language was not English and their anglophone supervisors. She said, “I think having an opportunity to engage nonverbally or musically could offer that space where there is a little more equity in terms of communication or expression.” Doris noted how this was similar to how improvisation can offer new avenues of expression for clients who have “difficulty with verbal expression.” By using music improvisation to improve equity across diverse language backgrounds, she believed it could enhance collaboration and more open communication in supervision, fundamental components of a constructive SWA.

Lisa suggested that improvisation could be a less intimidating way to address cross-cultural tensions in internship, compared to direct verbal discussion. She explained that improvisation can “start the conversations around worries or concerns of the student, including fielding inappropriate comments from clients and client families, which happens...sometimes.” While this approach could benefit all interns, she observed that those whose first language is not English are often more vulnerable to hostile remarks than their anglophone peers. These interns may suppress their true feelings in response to cultural microaggressions, leading to built-up stress that can surface within the supervisory relationship. In this context, music improvisation offers a safe space where interns can develop self-awareness and engage in introspection during supervision, which can, in turn, foster honest and open communication—an essential part of a constructive SWA.

Lisa observed that music improvisation can facilitate discussions about interns’ identities within intercultural supervisory relationships. She explained that improvisation “encourage[s] more conversation...about what the intern brings to the internship site in terms of identity,” while also acknowledging and valuing their unique cultural perspectives. This is particularly beneficial for interns whose first language is not English, as they may otherwise feel excluded because of language or cultural differences. By fostering self-awareness and confidence, improvisation can support the development of secure attachments with supervisors—an essential foundation for building confidence as emerging clinicians, achieving learning goals, and cultivating a constructive SWA.

Theme 2b: Enhanced Introspection and Extrospection

Alex believed that improvisation was especially valuable in intercultural preprofessional supervisory relationships because it allowed interns and supervisors to learn from one another and celebrate diversity, which can foster a constructive SWA. She explained, “When somebody comes from a different part of the world... they’re influenced with different instruments and different techniques.” Using improvisation in supervision creates a space to share and appreciate the richness of diverse cultural and musical backgrounds in intercultural supervisory relationships. This helps strengthen intercultural SWAs by promoting transparency, appreciation, and mutual respect of diversity.

Lisa proposed that improvisation could be effective in encouraging authentic expression within intercultural supervisory relationships, helping supervisors to get to know interns better. She said that improvisation could allow interns to offer their “true selves [which] is really important in becoming and knowing interns.” Lisa believed this was especially important for interns whose first language is not English. They can sometimes feel that they need to suppress or hide their cultural or linguistic background to be accepted in the profession. Through music improvisation, supervisors can support interns in expressing themselves more authentically, feeling accepted no matter their cultural background and enable deeper mutual understanding between supervisors and interns. This contributes to a constructive intercultural SWA by strengthening the bond and rapport between an intern and supervisor in an intercultural supervisory relationship.

Doris and Lisa suggested that incorporating music improvisation in supervision can help interns develop insight and self-awareness, both essential in any supervisory relationship. Doris explained that improvisation allows interns to process supervision topics in ways that “could lead to insight that might not otherwise be achieved.” She viewed this as especially valuable in intercultural supervision, where interns whose first language is not English may face cultural miscommunication or misunderstandings. Such barriers can make it difficult for supervisors to guide interns through clinical situations and self-reflection using only verbal processing. Yet, music improvisation offers an alternative method, using shared experience rather than words, to foster interns’ self-

awareness—a defining feature that may contribute to the development of a constructive SWA.

Theme 2c: Improved Learning

All participants highlighted the benefits of using music improvisation to enhance musical skills and support learning goals. Alex reflected that this was particularly valuable in her intercultural supervisory work with interns from Chinese or Korean backgrounds, many of whom had advanced western classical music training. She observed that such training often limited spontaneity in improvisation—an ability she considered vital for clinical practice. Alex emphasized that this challenge stemmed from musical culture rather than from linguistic or ethnic background. She explained that improvisation could “break down...rigidity,” help interns “oscillat[e] between structure and freedom,” and strengthen clinical musicianship. For her, supporting interns’ improvisation skills was central to meeting learning goals and meeting professional competencies, which are a product of a constructive intercultural SWA.

Doris believed improvisation could enhance interns’ learning in supervision by fostering experiential learning. She explained, “It’s one thing to talk about what you ought to do or could do in a clinical setting, but actually experiencing it—being in the music—might translate differently for the intern.” While valuable in all preprofessional music therapy supervision, she saw unique benefits in intercultural contexts, having struggled to teach certain concepts across cultural and linguistic boundaries in the past. Sometimes giving feedback to interns whose first language was not English felt ineffective due to a lack of positive change, sometimes met with defensiveness, which left her feeling frustrated. Reflecting on this, Doris recognized that external cultural and family pressures might have affected interns’ ability to put her feedback into practice. She believed improvisation could enrich learning in intercultural supervision by providing practical tools to meet professional competencies amidst external stressors—essential for a constructive SWA.

Category 3: Potential/Unique Challenges of Using Music Improvisation in Supervision to Foster a Constructive Intercultural SWA

Theme 3a: Limited Improvisation Skills

Participants noted that music improvisation can be difficult to incorporate in supervision when interns or supervisors lack—or believe they lack—improvisation skills. Rather than evaluating this challenge in terms of language/individual cultural differences, Alex explained, “I would look at it more so [as] classically trained musicians as a culture.” She observed that interns with classical training often display perfectionistic tendencies and prefer following a set chord progression, which makes free-flowing improvisation without this structure harder. While not limited to intercultural supervision with linguistically diverse interns, this reality can restrict the use of improvisation as a non-verbal communication tool. Interns may feel less open to engage and collaborate in supervision if they are being asked to improvise, something they feel uncomfortable doing. This could negatively affect the intercultural supervisory relationship and limit the development of a constructive SWA.

Lisa observed that interns who doubt their improvisation skills often feel intimidated to improvise with a supervisor. She noted, “I rarely have the student initiate” an improvisation experience, attributing this to their lack of confidence. Lisa believed such dynamics can occur in any supervisory relationship but interns whose first language is not English may experience heightened intimidation and fear of judgment due to cultural and linguistic factors. For these interns, improvisation can reinforce perceived deficiencies, further undermining confidence and reducing willingness to collaborate. This dynamic can create distance, weaken the intercultural supervisory relationship, and ultimately hinder the development of a constructive SWA.

Doris suggested that supervisors may also feel intimidated to improvise in supervision if they perceive themselves as lacking the skills to address supervision topics through music. She noted, “Just as...English create[s] some challenges expressing—or communicating verbally, there might be similar things in terms of cultural differences musically that come into play as well.” She felt that improvisation could highlight differences in musical proficiency related to specific cultural musical styles/genres. In other words, musical collaboration may be challenging when the supervisor and intern

have different cultural music backgrounds and this in turn could hinder the development of a constructive SWA.

Theme 3b: Supervisors' Perception of Improvisation's Potential to Elicit Counterproductive Discomfort

All the participants agreed that improvisation in supervision could create counterproductive discomfort by surfacing personal issues interns may not feel ready to address. Lisa explained, "I might be hesitant to bring up clinical improvisation because I might feel like I'm making the student uncomfortable." She also noted that interns whose first language is not English often encounter added stressors such as microaggressions, racist comments, and working in their nondominant language. Improvisation may intensify this stress by evoking emotions interns are not prepared to process in supervision. Alex added that improvisation, and music in general, can "bring up emotional challenges and bring up conversations about where these challenges came from," including cultural or family pressures. While potentially meaningful, this can also heighten interns' vulnerability in intercultural supervision contexts, where language proficiency may already create a power imbalance. In such cases, music improvisation may amplify existing stress, undermine the effectiveness of supervision, strain the intercultural supervisory relationship, and ultimately hinder the SWA.

Theme 3c: Exacerbated Challenges in Internship

Some participants believed that music improvisation could exacerbate challenges in the intercultural supervisory relationship and the internship overall. Lisa noted that internship sites may lack instruments that truly represent interns' musical identity and culture. She had more than one experience where the intern's primary instrument was not available at the internship site. In these cases, interns would have to use an alternate instrument to improvise which may not reflect their authentic musical self. Lisa said, "It's possible that [interns are] actually suppressing their own instrument because...it's not perceived to fit somehow." For interns from diverse backgrounds, especially those whose first language is different from that of their supervisors, not being able to bring their authentic musical self into supervision could amplify preexisting insecurities. It could also decrease their sense of belonging in the profession and negatively impact the potential for the full realization of a constructive SWA.

Chapter 5. Discussion

In this final chapter, I will offer some personal reflections and perspectives on the research process and findings. Rather than comparing the results to literature (which I may do in a future revised manuscript), there were complexities that emerged during the data collection and analysis processes that warrant further consideration. I will then present limitations of this study, implications of the results, and recommendations for future research.

Reflections on Research Process and Findings

Conducting interviews on this topic proved to be more challenging than I anticipated. There were times when I found it difficult to get the information that I needed to answer the research questions. Sometimes this was because participants would go off topic, which is common in qualitative interviews (Roberts, 2020). At times, participants appeared uneasy discussing interculturalism and expressed feeling worried about being perceived as racist when responding to some of my questions. This may have been due in part to the fact that my cultural and ethnic background was different than that of each participant, and that perhaps they might somehow offend me or others with their answers. It made me wonder if the interviews would have been different if we were having a casual conversation that was not recorded or meant for research purposes.

In the interviews, participants did not overtly acknowledge that their approaches to supervision were grounded in western Eurocentric philosophical approaches. For example, they believed that effective supervision involved mutual assertiveness in communication and non-hierarchical collaboration between supervisor and intern. However, the cultural origins of these practices were not acknowledged nor how they might contradict the cultural values of interns from diverse backgrounds. Further exploration of this topic is warranted in relation to navigating intercultural supervisory relationships in music therapy internship contexts.

Upon analyzing the transcripts, I observed instances in which I was reluctant to redirect discussions toward the research foci. Participants frequently offered responses that did not directly address the interview questions, particularly those concerning intercultural topics. I began to wonder whether these avoidances reflected underlying discomfort, and I was unconsciously trying to avoid that. On several occasions,

participants sought reassurance from me that their remarks about interculturalism were not insensitive or uninformed, which surprised me considering that their years of experience outnumbered mine. It also made me curious if they would have asked me the same questions if I shared a same cultural background to them.

My thesis supervisor and I were also engaged in an intercultural supervisory relationship where, my first language (Spanish) is not the same as my supervisor's (English). While we share some cultural and educational similarities, in hindsight we recognized a possible parallel process wherein aspects of our intercultural supervisory relationship seemed to be reflected in some of what I had experienced during the research interviews—all of which were conducted with anglophone supervisors. In both contexts, there were instances when communications felt unclear, but I was sometimes hesitant to ask for clarification or re-direct the conversation back to the topic. One could also wonder if this process was also a reflection of what had occurred in the intercultural supervisory relationships that the participants discussed in their interviews. My heightened awareness around the potential for these types of transferences to occur is important for my learning and for consideration in future research, supervisory and clinical endeavours, and specifically in relation to intercultural components inherent in these endeavours.

Limitations

I held several assumptions when conducting this study, which could be considered as limitations if they inadvertently impacted my data collection and analysis processes. For instance, I believed that music therapy internship supervisors in Canada have unique experiences, especially those who have supervised interns whose first language was not English. I assumed that most supervisors use conversation in supervision and use music improvisation in supervision minimally, if at all. I also believed that music improvisation held the potential to foster intercultural SWAs, though I assumed that it came with its challenges. I thought that the reflections of supervisors with more years of experience would yield richer results which would further expand the literature on music therapy supervision and address gaps in existing research on music therapy internship supervision in Canada and beyond.

This study had other limitations that should be acknowledged. This was my first time

conducting and analyzing qualitative research interviews. My interview and data analysis skills are still developing which could have influenced the depth of the participants' responses and data analysis. English was the only language used at each phase of this study and though English is the language I am most comfortable in academically, it is also my second language. These issues likely affected the way I led interviews, analyzed findings, and communicated them in this manuscript. Finally, this study was limited to the perspectives of three participants, all of whom had similar cultural and professional backgrounds and lived in Canada.

Implications

Intercultural Preprofessional Supervision in Music Therapy

Results of this study imply important considerations for supervisors when fostering a constructive SWA within intercultural supervisory relationship. Incorporating music improvisation into intercultural supervision may enhance communication, introspection, extrospection, and quality of learning—all essential to developing a strong SWA. However, supervisors could also consider that improvisation can present challenges, such as exposing perceived improvisation skill deficiencies, eliciting counterproductive discomfort, or exacerbating existing internship difficulties. If any of the aforementioned challenges arise, supervisors could be prepared to adapt the improvisation for the benefit of fostering a constructive SWA. The findings further indicate that interns of diverse cultural backgrounds may experience unique challenges in supervision and internship. Supervisors can remain attentive to these challenges and adapt their approaches in supervision to promote equity, inclusivity, and support interns in achieving their individual learning goals, thereby strengthening the SWA.

Music Therapy Supervisor Training

Results of this study underscore the need for music therapy supervisor training that emphasizes cultural responsiveness, especially within intercultural supervisory relationships. This training would guide supervisors in an ongoing process of self-reflection, learning, and adaptation within intercultural supervision. Given that music is a vital component of music therapy clinical and supervision practice, training would also teach supervisors various ways to incorporate music improvisation into supervision processes. Training could include how to use music improvisation to: (a) process clinical

material, (b) improve communication, (c) cultivate self-awareness, (d) help interns and supervisors relate to one another, (e) enhance bonding, and (f) help interns meet learning goals; all of which hold potential to foster a constructive SWA in intercultural music therapy internship supervision contexts.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study addressed gaps in understanding how music improvisation can support a constructive intercultural SWA in preprofessional music therapy supervision. As the music therapy profession in Canada continues to diversify, further research is needed. Future studies could examine the experiences of supervisors and interns whose first language is not English, particularly in English-speaking contexts where neither is a native English speaker. Research could also explore additional cultural factors—such as religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, and musical culture—to deepen understanding of intercultural SWAs. Finally, studies might investigate training and strategies for integrating receptive music experiences (e.g., music listening) and different active music experiences (e.g., playing precomposed music) in supervision to foster a constructive SWA.

Closing Remarks

When I first chose to explore this research topic, I hoped to contribute insights to the music therapy profession that might inspire positive change. While the study does offer meaningful findings, I feel that the most significant transformation happened within me. The process became far more self-reflective than I had anticipated, encouraging me to examine my relationship with my cultural and linguistic background, confront my own cultural insecurities, and more fully embrace my identity as a second-generation Guatemalan Canadian. Along the way, I also realized how much fear still exists around conversations about diversity, often revealing underlying wounds in society. I believe that healing across cultural differences is possible, but it begins with honesty, openness, and a willingness to engage with uncomfortable topics. Ultimately, this study has inspired me to continue discussing these topics, reflecting on who I am, and carrying this newfound insight into my future clinical, supervisory, and research work.

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**Appendix A:
Ethics Approval**



**CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY
FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS**

Name of Applicant: Alejandra Arevalo
Department: Faculty of Fine Arts\Creative Arts Therapies
Agency: N/A
Title of Project: Fostering Constructive Intercultural Supervisory Working Alliances (SWAs) in Music Therapy Internships through Music Improvisation: A Qualitative Interview Study
Certification Number: 30021269

Valid From: December 18, 2024 To: December 17, 2025

The members of the University Human Research Ethics Committee have examined the application for a grant to support the above-named project, and consider the experimental procedures, as outlined by the applicant, to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard DeMont".

Dr. Richard DeMont, Chair, University Human Research Ethics Committee

Appendix B:

Participant Recruitment Letter (Pre-Amendment)

Dear esteemed music therapy colleagues,

This is an invitation to participate in a research study being conducted by Alejandra Arevalo under the supervision of Dr. Laurel Young at Concordia University. This research is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master's in Creative Arts Therapies (music therapy option) at Concordia University and has received ethics approval from Concordia University's Human Research Ethics Committee (protocol # 30021269). This qualitative research will examine three (3) Canadian-based music therapy internship supervisors on using music improvisation as a means of fostering constructive intercultural supervisory working alliances (SWA) between anglophone music therapy internship supervisors and interns whose primary language is not English.

The criteria for inclusion are:

- Must be a certified music therapists (MTAs) in good standing
- Needs to have completed the Canadian Association of Music Therapists (CAMT) level one supervision training required to become an internship supervisor
- Must have least 5 years of experience providing pre-professional music therapy internship supervision as the main/primary music therapy supervisor (i.e., the supervisor who completes the intern's final CAMT internship evaluation)
- Must identify English as their primary language
- Needs to have supervised at least one intern who whose primary language is not English
- Must have either used music improvisation in internship supervision (even minimally) and/or would be open to using music improvisation in internship supervision.

Participants are invited to participate in a 60 minute online individual interview (via Zoom) and speak about their practices and perspectives on using music improvisation in intercultural supervision experiences. Interviews will be audio recorded and conducted in English.

Five to ten business days after the interview, you will be contacted one more time and asked to review the interview transcript and make any desired changes (within 10 business days). Participation in this research study is voluntary and confidential.

If potentially interested, please contact Alejandra directly at [email retracted] for more information. Participation will be limited to the first three (3) participants who contact the researcher, meet the criteria for inclusion, provide informed consent, and do not withdraw from the research process. Please feel free to contact me, or my research supervisor, with any further questions.

Sincerely,

Researcher: Alejandra Arevalo, MTA,
MT-BC, RP (Qualifying), NMT-F
Department of Creative Arts Therapies
Concordia University
[email retracted]

Faculty Research Supervisor: Laurel
Young, PhD, MTA
Department of Creative Arts Therapies
Concordia University
laurel.young@concordia.ca

Appendix C:

Participant Recruitment Letter (Post Amendment)

Note: The highlighted text below indicates information that was added at the time of the amendment. It was not part of the original recruitment document.

Dear esteemed music therapy colleagues,

This is an invitation to participate in a research study being conducted by Alejandra Arevalo under the supervision of Dr. Laurel Young at Concordia University. This research is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master's in Creative Arts Therapies (music therapy option) at Concordia University and has received ethics approval from Concordia University's Human Research Ethics Committee (protocol #30021269). This qualitative research will examine three (3) Canadian-based music therapy internship supervisors on using music improvisation as a means of fostering constructive intercultural supervisory working alliances (SWA) between anglophone music therapy internship supervisors and interns whose primary language is not English.

The criteria for inclusion are:

- Must be a certified music therapists (MTAs) in good standing or a former MTA who previously practiced music therapy and supervised interns in Canada, but currently does not reside in Canada
- Needs to have completed the Canadian Association of Music Therapists (CAMT) level one supervision training required to become an internship supervisor or became an approved CAMT internship supervisor through a grandparenting process
- Must have least 5 years of experience providing pre-professional music therapy internship supervision as the main/primary music therapy supervisor (i.e., the supervisor who completes the intern's final CAMT internship evaluation)
- Must identify English as their primary language
- Needs to have supervised at least one intern who whose primary language is not English
- Must have either used music improvisation in internship supervision (even minimally) and/or would be open to using music improvisation in internship supervision.

Participants are invited to participate in a 60 minute online individual interview (via Zoom) and speak about their practices and perspectives on using music improvisation in intercultural supervision experiences. Interviews will be audio recorded and conducted in English.

Five to ten business days after the interview, you will be contacted one more time and asked to review the interview transcript and make any desired changes (within 10 business days). Participation in this research study is voluntary and confidential.

If potentially interested, please contact Alejandra directly at [email retracted] for more

information Participation will be limited to the first three (3) participants who contact the researcher, meet the criteria for inclusion, provide informed consent, and do not withdraw from the research process. Please feel free to contact me, or my research supervisor, with any further questions.

Sincerely,

Researcher: Alejandra Arevalo, MTA,
MT-BC, RP (Qualifying), NMT-F
Department of Creative Arts Therapies
Concordia University
[email retracted]

Faculty Research Supervisor: Laurel
Young, PhD, MTA
Department of Creative Arts Therapies
Concordia University
laurel.young@concordia.ca

Appendix D:
Approved Ethics Amendment



**CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY
FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS**

Name of Applicant: Alejandra Arevalo
Department: Faculty of Fine Arts\Creative Arts Therapies
Agency: N/A
Title of Project: Fostering Constructive Intercultural Supervisory Working Alliances (SWAs) in Music Therapy Internships through Music Improvisation: A Qualitative Interview Study

Certification Number: 30021269

Valid From: May 20, 2025 To: May 19, 2026

The members of the University Human Research Ethics Committee have examined the application for a grant to support the above-named project, and consider the experimental procedures, as outlined by the applicant, to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard DeMont".

Dr. Richard DeMont, Chair, University Human Research Ethics Committee

Appendix E:

Information and Consent Form (Pre-Amendment)

INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM (Protocol # 30021269)

Study Title: Fostering Constructive Intercultural Supervisory Working Alliances in Music Therapy Internships through Music Improvisation: A Qualitative Interview Study

Researcher: Alejandra Arevalo, master's Student, Creative Arts Therapies (Music Therapy Research Thesis Option),

Researcher's Contact Information: [email retracted]

Faculty Supervisor: Laurel Young, Ph.D., MTA, Professor, Music Therapy, Creative Arts Therapies

Faculty Supervisor's Contact Information:

1455 de Maisonneuve O

Montreal, Quebec

Canada H3G 1M8

514-848-2424 ext. 4682

laurel.young@concordia.ca

Source of funding for the study: N/A

You are being invited to participate in the research study mentioned above. This form provides information about what participating would mean. Please read it carefully before deciding if you want to participate or not. If there is anything you do not understand, or if you want more information, please ask the researcher.

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to explore the perspectives of three Canadian-based music therapy internship supervisors on using music improvisations as a means of fostering constructive intercultural supervisory working alliances (SWA) between anglophone music therapy internship supervisors and interns whose primary language is not English. It is hoped that the results of this study will help fill in the gaps within current research, provide useful insights for future investigation, and offer practical applications in pre-professional music therapy supervision contexts.

To participate in this study, participants must meet the following criteria: (a) be a certified music therapist (MTA) in good standing, (b) completed the Canadian Association of Music Therapists (CAMT) level one supervision training required to become an internship supervisor, (c) have at least 5 years of experience providing pre-professional music therapy internship supervision as the main/primary MTA supervisor (i.e., the supervisor who completes the intern's final CAMT internship evaluation), (d) identify English as their primary language, (e) supervised at least one intern whose primary language is not English, (f) have either used music improvisation in internship supervision (even minimally) and/or would be open to using music improvisation in internship supervision.

B. PROCEDURES

Upon receipt of a signed consent form, the researcher will contact you via e-mail to set a mutually convenient time for an online videoconference call on Zoom where you participate in a one-on-one interview lasting no more than 60 minutes. One week (5 business days) prior to the scheduled interview date, you will be emailed an interview guide containing the interview questions. Participants are encouraged to review this document before the interview, but it is not mandatory.

During the interview, you may also ask questions, refuse to answer questions, and express any concerns you may have. Please consider that the interview be audio recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed through qualitative coding processes. The audio recordings will only be used for analysis purposes. There will not be any public presentations or publications using the audio recordings and they will be destroyed 5 years after the thesis has been published on Spectrum, Concordia's open-access research repository

The researcher will transcribe the interview and email it to you in an encrypted Microsoft Word document 5 to 10 business days after the interview. You will have the opportunity to review the transcript and return it with any revision recommendations no more than 10 business days after receiving the transcript. If you do not respond within the given time frame, it will be assumed that no revisions are required.

In total, participating in this study will take no more than 2 hours. This includes time allotted for reviewing materials noted above, participating in the interview, time spent reviewing and/or amending to the interview transcript.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS

This research contains no foreseeable risks. Some participants might experience mild discomfort if recounting a difficult internship situation. Prior to the interview, the researcher will provide you with a list of resources should you need additional support after the interview. You may refuse to answer any question, take a break, or end the interview at any point.

While there are no direct benefits to participating in this study, having an opportunity to reflect on your supervisory practices may give you insights and positively influence your supervisory work. You may also feel a sense of satisfaction knowing that they are contributing to research pertaining to pre-professional music therapy supervision which may help address gaps in research, inform future studies, and offer practical applications for music therapy internship supervision.

D. CONFIDENTIALITY

The identity of each participant in this research will remain confidential. Therefore, any identifying information will be removed from any direct quotes or other data presented in the final research report. It is important to note that participants will take part in this research as individuals and will not be representing their place(s) of employment. No identifying information pertaining to these organizations will be included in this study.

I will gather the following information as part of this research:

Your name

Contact information (i.e., email address)

Responses to interview questions

The researcher will not allow anyone to access the information, except people directly involved in conducting the research (i.e., the researcher and the faculty supervisor). We will only use the information for the purposes of the research described in this form.

The researcher will protect the data by:

Using two digital recording software to audio-record the interview on a password-protected laptop. The audio of the interview itself will be recorded directly on Zoom, while a backup recording will be done on the researcher's password protected phone. Recordings will not be stored on any type of cloud storage.

Transferring recordings within 24 hours after the interview from the researcher's password-protected laptop to an external back-up hard drive that will be stored in a locked container. The researcher is the only person who will have access to passwords for the encrypted folders mentioned above.

Storing interview transcripts in the researcher's password protected laptop within encrypted folders. Transcripts will be backed up using external hard drives within encrypted folders and will not be saved on any type of cloud storage.

The researcher intends to publish the results of the research. However, it will not be possible to identify you in the published results.

The researcher will destroy all raw data five years after the end of the study (i.e., the study is deemed complete once it has been published to Concordia's open-access online research repository: Spectrum).

I would like to be sent a link to the final published study on Spectrum:

Yes

No

F. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

You do not have to participate in this research. It is purely your decision. If you do participate, you can stop at any time. You can also ask that the information you provided not be used, and your choice will be respected. If you decide that you don't want us to use your information, you must inform the researcher no later than 10 business days after you receive the interview transcript. If you withdraw before this deadline, your data will be destroyed and will not be included as part of the research.

There are no negative consequences for not participating, stopping in the middle, or asking us not to use your information.

G. PARTICIPANT'S DECLARATION

I have read and understood this form. I have had the chance to ask questions, and any questions have been answered. I agree to participate in this research under the conditions described.

NAME (please print)

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

If you have questions about the scientific or scholarly aspects of this research, please contact the researcher. Their contact information is on page 1. You may also contact their faculty supervisor.

If you have concerns about ethical issues in this research, please contact the Manager, Research Ethics, Concordia University, 514.848.2424 ex. 7481 or oor.ethics@concordia.ca.

Appendix F:

Information and Consent Form (Post Amendment)

Note: The highlighted text below indicates information that was added at the time of the amendment. It was not part of the original document.

INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM (Protocol 30021269)

Study Title: Fostering Constructive Intercultural Supervisory Working Alliances in Music Therapy Internships through Music Improvisation: A Qualitative Interview Study

Researcher: Alejandra Arevalo, master's Student, Creative Arts Therapies (Music Therapy Research Thesis Option),

Researcher's Contact Information: [email retracted]

Faculty Supervisor: Laurel Young, Ph.D., MTA, Professor, Music Therapy, Creative Arts Therapies

Faculty Supervisor's Contact Information:

1455 de Maisonneuve O

Montreal, Quebec

Canada H3G 1M8

514-848-2424 ext. 4682

laurel.young@concordia.ca

Source of funding for the study: N/A

You are being invited to participate in the research study mentioned above. This form provides information about what participating would mean. Please read it carefully before deciding if you want to participate or not. If there is anything you do not understand, or if you want more information, please ask the researcher.

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to explore the perspectives of three Canadian-based music therapy internship supervisors on using music improvisations as a means of fostering constructive intercultural supervisory working alliances (SWA) between anglophone music therapy internship supervisors and interns whose primary language is not English. It is hoped that the results of this study will help fill in the gaps within current research, provide useful insights for future investigation, and offer practical applications in pre-professional music therapy supervision contexts.

To participate in this study, participants must meet the following criteria: (a) be a certified music therapist (MTA) in good standing or a former MTA who previously practiced music therapy and supervised interns in Canada, but currently does not reside in Canada, (b) completed the Canadian Association of Music Therapists (CAMT) level one supervision training required to become an internship supervisor or became an approved CAMT internship supervisor through a grandparenting, (c) have at least 5 years of experience providing pre-professional music therapy internship supervision as the main/primary MTA supervisor (i.e., the supervisor who completes the intern's final CAMT internship evaluation), (d) identify English as their primary language, (e) supervised at least one intern whose primary language is not English, (f) have either used music

improvisation in internship supervision (even minimally) and/or would be open to using music improvisation in internship supervision.

B. PROCEDURES

Upon receipt of a signed consent form, the researcher will contact you via e-mail to set a mutually convenient time for an online videoconference call on Zoom where you participate in a one-on-one interview lasting no more than 60 minutes. One week (5 business days) prior to the scheduled interview date, you will be emailed an interview guide containing the interview questions. Participants are encouraged to review this document before the interview, but it is not mandatory.

During the interview, you may also ask questions, refuse to answer questions, and express any concerns you may have. Please consider that the interview be audio recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed through qualitative coding processes. The audio recordings will only be used for analysis purposes. There will not be any public presentations or publications using the audio recordings and they will be destroyed 5 years after the thesis has been published on Spectrum, Concordia's open-access research repository

The researcher will transcribe the interview and email it to you in an encrypted Microsoft Word document 5 to 10 business days after the interview. You will have the opportunity to review the transcript and return it with any revision recommendations no more than 10 business days after receiving the transcript. If you do not respond within the given time frame, it will be assumed that no revisions are required.

In total, participating in this study will take no more than 2 hours. This includes time allotted for reviewing materials noted above, participating in the interview, time spent reviewing and/or amending to the interview transcript.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS

This research contains no foreseeable risks. Some participants might experience mild discomfort if recounting a difficult internship situation. Prior to the interview, the researcher will provide you with a list of resources should you need additional support after the interview. You may refuse to answer any question, take a break, or end the interview at any point.

While there are no direct benefits to participating in this study, having an opportunity to reflect on your supervisory practices may give you insights and positively influence your supervisory work. You may also feel a sense of satisfaction knowing that they are contributing to research pertaining to pre-professional music therapy supervision which may help address gaps in research, inform future studies, and offer practical applications for music therapy internship supervision.

D. CONFIDENTIALITY

The identity of each participant in this research will remain confidential. Therefore, any

identifying information will be removed from any direct quotes or other data presented in the final research report. It is important to note that participants will take part in this research as individuals and will not be representing their place(s) of employment. No identifying information pertaining to these organizations will be included in this study.

I will gather the following information as part of this research:

Your name

Contact information (i.e., email address)

Responses to interview questions

The researcher will not allow anyone to access the information, except people directly involved in conducting the research (i.e., the researcher and the faculty supervisor). We will only use the information for the purposes of the research described in this form.

The researcher will protect the data by:

Using two digital recording software to audio-record the interview on a password-protected laptop. The audio of the interview itself will be recorded directly on Zoom, while a backup recording will be done on the researcher's password protected phone. Recordings will not be stored on any type of cloud storage.

Transferring recordings within 24 hours after the interview from the researcher's password-protected laptop to an external back-up hard drive that will be stored in a locked container. The researcher is the only person who will have access to passwords for the encrypted folders mentioned above.

Storing interview transcripts in the researcher's password protected laptop within encrypted folders. Transcripts will be backed up using external hard drives within encrypted folders and will not be saved on any type of cloud storage.

The researcher intends to publish the results of the research. However, it will not be possible to identify you in the published results.

The researcher will destroy all raw data five years after the end of the study (i.e., the study is deemed complete once it has been published to Concordia's open-access online research repository: Spectrum).

I would like to be sent a link to the final published study on Spectrum:

Yes

No

F. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

You do not have to participate in this research. It is purely your decision. If you do participate, you can stop at any time. You can also ask that the information you provided not be used, and your choice will be respected. If you decide that you don't want us to use your information, you must inform the researcher no later than 10 business days after you receive the interview transcript. If you withdraw before this deadline, your data will be destroyed and will not be included as part of the research.

There are no negative consequences for not participating, stopping in the middle, or asking us not to use your information.

G. PARTICIPANT’S DECLARATION

I have read and understood this form. I have had the chance to ask questions, and any questions have been answered. I agree to participate in this research under the conditions described.

NAME (please print)

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

If you have questions about the scientific or scholarly aspects of this research, please contact the researcher. Their contact information is on page 1. You may also contact their faculty supervisor.

If you have concerns about ethical issues in this research, please contact the Manager, Research Ethics, Concordia University, 514.848.2424 ex. 7481 or oor.ethics@concordia.ca.

Appendix G:

Interview Guide and Definitions of Key Terms

1. How long have you been a CAMT approved music therapy internship supervisor?
2. Approximately how many interns have you served as the primary CAMT internship supervisor (i.e., you signed off on their final CAMT evaluation)?
3. How many music therapy interns have you supervised within an intercultural context whose primary language was not English? (approximately)
4. How would you describe your approach to music therapy internship supervision? Is it informed by any particular theories/other sources?
5. What are your perspectives on the need to foster a constructive supervisory working alliance with music therapy interns? How would you describe a constructive supervisory working alliance within the context of music therapy internship supervision? (i.e., what components make up a constructive supervisory working alliance?)
6. Can you describe/give one or two examples of challenges you have experienced within intercultural music therapy internship contexts (intern's primary language not English) and how these impacted the supervisory working alliance? How did you address these challenges?
7. Have you ever incorporated music improvisation into your music therapy internship supervision approach?
 - a. If so, how? And how often? (i.e., once in a while, frequently, all of the time)
 - b. If not, why not?
8. Based on your experience of using improvisation in music therapy internship supervision and/or based on your experience as an internship supervisor overall, what are your perspectives on using music improvisation as a means of fostering a constructive intercultural supervisory working alliance, specifically with music therapy interns whose first language is not English?
 - a. Are there any unique potential benefits?
 - b. What might be some potential challenges?
9. Is there anything else you would like to add?

When answering the above questions, please note how the following terms are being defined within the context of the present study.

Music improvisation: occurs when an individual creates new music as they play, sing, or extemporize a melody, rhythm, song, or instrumental excerpt. It can occur independently or with others in a duet or group (Bruscia, 2014).

Intercultural: relationships, behaviours, and norms that are adopted by culturally diverse groups of people. It is characterized by respect and a mutual exchange of ideas where everyone learns from each other (Cambridge, 2024; Schriefer, 2016).

Supervisory Working Alliance (SWA): the formal relationship between a supervisor and a supervisee which drives supervisory collaboration and change. It consists of three main components including mutually agreed upon goals, assigned tasks and responsibilities to meet those goals, and the bond between the supervisor and supervisee (Basa, 2017).