

American Music Therapy Association (AMTA) Professional Competencies

In moving from a course-based to a competency-base curriculum, it must be emphasized that the approved list of competencies not be viewed as a static requirement. As the clinical and research activities of music therapy provide new information, the competency list can and must be revised to reflect the growth of the knowledge base of the profession. As such, this list provides a common ground from which present state, comparisons, and trends can be determined. They also provide a cumulative definition of what we do as music therapists and, therefore, better enable us to convey that definition to others. Scartelli (1994). Pp. 1,3.

A. MUSIC FOUNDATIONS

1. Music Theory and History

- 1.1 Recognize standard works in the literature.
- 1.2 Identify the elemental, structural, and stylistic characteristics of music from various periods and cultures.
- 1.3 Sight-sing melodies of both diatonic and chromatic makeup.
- 1.4 Take aural dictation of melodies, rhythms, and chord progressions.
- 1.5 Transpose simple compositions.

2. Composition and Arranging Skills

- 2.1 Compose songs with simple accompaniment.
- 2.2 Adapt, arrange, transpose, and simplify music compositions for small vocal and nonsymphonic instrumental ensembles.

3. Major Performance Medium Skills

- 3.1 Perform appropriate undergraduate repertoire; demonstrate musicianship, technical proficiency, and interpretive understanding on a principal instrument/voice.
- 3.2 Perform in small and large ensembles.

4. Keyboard Skills

- 4.1 Accompany self and ensembles proficiently.
- 4.2 Play basic chord progressions (I-IV-V-I) in several keys.
- 4.3 Sight-read simple compositions and song accompaniments.
- 4.4 Play a basic repertoire of traditional, folk, and popular songs with or without printed music.
- 4.5 Harmonize and transpose simple compositions.

5. Guitar Skills

- 5.1 Accompany self and ensembles proficiently.
- 5.2 Employ simple strumming and finger picking techniques.
- 5.3 Tune guitar using standard and other tunings.
- 5.4 Perform a basic repertoire of traditional, folk, and popular songs with or without printed music.
- 5.5 Harmonize and transpose simple compositions in several keys.

6. Voice Skills

- 6.1 Lead group singing by voice.
- 6.2 Communicate vocally with adequate volume (loudness).
- 6.3 Sing a basic repertoire of traditional, folk, and popular songs in tune with a pleasing quality.

7. Nonsymphonic Instrumental Skills

- 7.1 Play percussion instruments alone or in ensemble.
- 7.2 Demonstrate basic knowledge of care and maintenance of nonsymphonic and ethnic instruments.
- 7.3 Play autoharp or omnichord with same competence specified for guitar.
- 7.4 Demonstrate basic understanding of technologically advanced instruments (omnichord, MIDI, electronic keyboard).
- 7.5 Demonstrate basic skills (i.e. rudiments) on several standard percussion instruments sufficient to facilitate rhythm-based experiences for groups and individuals.

8. Improvisation Skills

- 8.1 Improvise on percussion instruments.
- 8.2 Compose and develop original melodies, accompaniments, and short pieces extemporaneously in a variety of moods and styles, vocally, and instrumentally.
- 8.3 Improvise in small ensembles.

9. Conducting Skills

- 9.1 Conduct basic patterns with technical accuracy.
- 9.2 Conduct small and large vocal and instrumental ensembles.

10. Movement Skills

- 10.1 Direct structured and improvisatory movement experiences.
- 10.2 Move in structural rhythmic and improvisatory manners for expressive purposes.
- 10.3 Move expressively and with interpretation to music within rhythmic structure.

B. CLINICAL FOUNDATIONS

11. Exceptionality

- 11.1 Demonstrate basic knowledge of the potentials, limitations, and problems of exceptional individuals.
- 11.2 Demonstrate basic knowledge of the causes and symptoms of major exceptionalities, and basic terminology used in diagnosis and classification.
- 11.3 Demonstrate basic knowledge of typical and atypical human systems and development (e.g. anatomical, physiological, psychological, social.)

12. Principles of Therapy

- 12.1 Demonstrate basic knowledge of the dynamics and processes of a therapist-client relationship.
- 12.2 Demonstrate basic knowledge of the dynamics and processes of therapy groups.
- 12.3 Demonstrate basic knowledge of accepted methods of major therapeutic approaches.

13. The Therapeutic Relationship

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- 13.1 Recognize the impact of one's own feelings, attitudes, and actions on the client the therapy process.
 - 13.2 Establish and maintain interpersonal relationships with clients that are conducive to therapy.
 - 13.3 Use oneself effectively in the therapist role in both individual and group therapy, appropriate self-disclosure, authenticity, empathy, etc. toward affecting desired behavioral outcomes.
 - 13.4 Utilize the dynamics and processes of groups to achieve therapeutic goals

C. MUSIC THERAPY

14. Foundations and Principles

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- 14.1 Demonstrate basic knowledge of existing music therapy methods, techniques, materials, and equipment with their appropriate applications.
 - 14.2 Demonstrate basic knowledge of principles, and methods of music therapy assessment and their appropriate application.
 - 14.3 Demonstrate basic knowledge of the principles and methods for evaluating the effects of music therapy.
 - 14.4 Demonstrate basic knowledge of the purpose, intent, and function of music for various client populations.
 - 14.5 Demonstrate basic knowledge of the psychological and physiological aspects of musical behavior and experience (i.e. music and affect; influence of music on behavior; physiological responses to music; perception and cognition of music; psychomotor components of music behavior; music learning and development; preference; creativity).
 - 14.6 Demonstrate basic knowledge of philosophical, psychological, physiological, and sociological bases for the use of music as therapy.

15. Client Assessment

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- 15.1 Communicate assessment findings and recommendations in written and verbal forms.
 - 15.2 Observe and record accurately the client's responses to assessment.
 - 15.3 Identify the client's appropriate and inappropriate behaviors.
 - 15.4 Select, design, and implement effective culturally based methods for assessing client's assets, and problems through music.
 - 15.5 Select, design, and implement effective culturally based methods for assessing client's musical preferences and level of musical functioning or development.
 - 15.6 Identify the client's therapeutic needs through an analysis and interpretation of therapy and related assessment data.
 - 15.7 Demonstrate knowledge of professional standards of clinical practice regarding assessment.

16. Treatment Planning

- 16.1 Select or create music therapy experiences that meet the client's objectives.
- 16.2 Formulate goals and objectives for individuals and group therapy based upon assessment findings.
- 16.3 Identify the client's primary treatment needs in music therapy.
- 16.4 Provide preliminary estimates of frequency and duration of treatment.
- 16.5 Select and adapt music consistent with strengths and needs of the client.
- 16.6 Formulate music therapy strategies for individuals and groups based upon the goals and objectives adopted.
- 16.7 Select and adapt musical instruments and equipment consistent with strengths and needs of the client.
- 16.8 Organize and arrange the music therapy setting to facilitate the client's therapeutic involvement.
- 16.9 Plan and sequence music therapy sessions.
- 16.10 Determine the client's appropriate music therapy group and/or individual placement.
- 16.11 Coordinate treatment plan with other professionals.
- 16.12 Demonstrate knowledge of professional standards of clinical practice regarding planning.

17. Therapy Implementation

- 17.1 Recognize, interpret, and respond appropriately to significant events in music therapy sessions as they occur.
- 17.2 Provide music therapy experiences to change nonmusical behavior.
- 17.3 Provide verbal and nonverbal directions and cues necessary for successful client participation.
- 17.4 Utilize singing skills in music therapy sessions.
- 17.5 Provide models for appropriate social behavior in group music therapy.
- 17.6 Utilize therapeutic verbal skills in music therapy sessions.
- 17.7 Sequence and pace music experiences within a session according to the client's needs and situational factors.
- 17.8 Conduct or facilitate group and individual music therapy.
- 17.9 Establish closure of music therapy sessions.
- 17.10 Implement music therapy program according to treatment plan.
- 17.11 Promote a sense of group cohesiveness and/or a feeling of group membership.
- 17.12 Provide music therapy experiences that assist the client in development of social skills.
- 17.13 Communicate to the client's expectations of their behavior.
- 17.14 Assist the client to communicate more effectively.
- 17.15 Provide music therapy experiences to improve the client's sense of self and sense of self with others.
- 17.16 Create a physical environment (e.g. arrangement of space, furniture, equipment, and instruments) that is conducive to effective therapy.
- 17.17 Provide music therapy experiences to elicit social interactions.
- 17.18 Provide music therapy experiences to promote client decision-making.
- 17.19 Develop and maintain a repertoire of music for age, culture, and stylistic differences.
- 17.20 Provide music therapy experiences that assist the client in increasing on-task behavior.
- 17.21 Provide music therapy experiences to elicit affective responses from the client.
- 17.22 Provide feedback on, reflect, rephrase, and translate the client's communications.
- 17.23 Establish closure of treatment issues.

- 17.24 Provide sensory stimulation through music therapy experiences that allow the client to use visual, auditory, or tactile cues.
- 17.25 Utilize non-symphonic instruments (pitched and unpitched) in music therapy sessions.
- 17.26 Provide music therapy experiences to encourage creative responses from the client.
- 17.27 Use music with techniques of relaxation and/or stress reduction.
- 17.28 Provide music therapy experiences to improve the client's orientation to person, place, and time.
- 17.29 Provide music therapy experiences to enhance the client's cognitive/intellectual development.
- 17.30 Recognize and respond appropriately to effects of the client's medications.
- 17.31 Demonstrate knowledge of professional standards of clinical practice regarding implementation.

18. Therapy Evaluation

- 18.1 Recognize and respond appropriately to situations in which there are clear and present dangers to the client and/or others.
- 18.2 Modify treatment approaches based on the client's response to therapy.
- 18.3 Recognize significant changes and patterns in the client's response to therapy.
- 18.4 Revise treatment plan as needed.
- 18.5 Establish and work within realistic time frames for evaluating the effects of therapy.
- 18.6 Review treatment plan periodically within guidelines set by agency.
- 18.7 Design and implement methods for evaluating and measuring client progress and the effectiveness of therapeutic strategies.
- 18.8 Demonstrate knowledge of professional standards of clinical practice regarding evaluation.

19. Documentation

- 19.1 Produce documentation that accurately reflect client change and meet the requirements of internal and external legal, regulatory, and reimbursement bodies.
- 19.2 Document clinical data.
- 19.3 Write professional reports describing the client throughout all phases of the music therapy process in an accurate, concise, and objective manner.
- 19.4 Communicate orally with the client, parents, significant others, and team members regarding the client's progress and various aspects of the client's music therapy program.
- 19.5 Document and revise the treatment plan and document changes to the treatment plan.
- 19.6 Develop and use data-gathering techniques during all phases of the clinical process including assessment, treatment, and evaluation.
- 19.7 Demonstrate knowledge of professional standards of clinical practice regarding documentation.

20. Termination/Discharge Planning

- 20.1 Inform and prepare the client for approaching termination from music therapy.
- 20.2 Establish closure of music therapy services by time of termination/discharge.
- 20.3 Determine termination of the client from music therapy.
- 20.4 Integrate music therapy termination plan with plans for the client's discharge from the facility.

- 20.5 Assess potential benefits/detriments of termination of music therapy.
- 20.6 Develop music therapy termination plan.
- 20.7 Demonstrate knowledge of professional standards of clinical practice regarding termination.

21. Professional Role/Ethics

- 21.1 Adhere to professional code of ethics.
- 21.2 Interpret and apply ethical standards of the music therapy profession.
- 21.3 Adhere to professional standards of clinical practice.
- 21.4 Demonstrate dependability: follow through with all tasks regarding education and professional training.
- 21.5 Accept criticism/feedback with willingness and follow through in a productive manner.
- 21.6 Resolve conflicts in a positive and constructive manner.
- 21.7 Meet deadlines without prompting.
- 21.8 Express thoughts and personal feelings in a consistently constructive manner.
- 21.9 Demonstrate critical self-awareness of strengths and weaknesses.
- 21.10 Interpret and apply laws and regulations regarding the human rights of the clients.
- 21.11 Demonstrate basic knowledge of professional music therapy organizations and how these organizations influence clinical practice.
- 21.12 Demonstrate basic knowledge of music therapy service reimbursement and financing sources (e.g., Medicare, Medicaid, Private Health Insurance, State and Local Health and/or Education Agencies, Grants).

22. Interdisciplinary Collaboration

- 22.1 Demonstrate a basic understanding of the roles and develop working relationships with other disciplines in the client's treatment program.
- 22.2 Define the role of music therapy in the client's total treatment program.
- 22.3 Collaborate with team members in designing and implementing interdisciplinary treatment programs.

23. Supervision and Administration

- 23.1 Participate in and benefit from supervision.
- 23.2 Manage and maintain music therapy equipment and supplies.
- 23.3 Perform administrative duties usually required of clinicians (e.g. scheduling programmatic budgeting, maintaining record files).
- 23.4 Write proposals to create and/or establish new music therapy programs.

24. Research Methods

- 24.1 Interpret information in the professional research literature.
- 24.2 Determine if conclusions drawn in a study are supported by the results.
- 24.3 Demonstrate basic knowledge of the purpose and methodology of historical, quantitative, and qualitative research.
- 24.4 Perform a data-based literature search.
- 24.5 Apply selected research findings to clinical practice.

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