

Music Therapy Charity
Final report – 25 February 2020

1. Title of project and your name

Evaluating Nordoff Robbins music therapy services in the UK: Exploring the applicability and transferability of impact areas

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2. Study aims, planned length of the project and actual length of the project by the end of the project.

The aim of this study was to explore how the Impact Areas Questionnaire (IAQ) – a core component of the service evaluation system of Nordoff Robbins England and Wales (NREW) – could be implemented in other contexts of work, taking Nordoff Robbins Scotland (NRS) as a case.¹ Data collection for the study (see Phase A and Phase B below) took place in 2017.

3. Please provide a summary of up to 500 words including:

The aim of this project was to explore how the IAQ could be implemented in other contexts of work, taking NRS as a case. As such, the project explored the applicability and transferability of the IAQ and its relevance to NRS's contexts of work. By doing so, this study aimed to identify potential improvements in the IAQ prior to making it available to the wider music therapy community. This was the first time that the IAQ was used within another organisation outside the context within which it was originally developed. Although the IAQ can be relevant to music therapists beyond Nordoff-Robbins, NRS was an obvious place for testing the IAQ given the existing partnership between NRS and NREW and some of their shared theoretical and practice underpinnings.

This research project included two phases. Phase A focused on replicating and implementing the IAQ across all NRS services. For the purposes of this project, and to facilitate comparison (as and when appropriate), NRS replicated the questionnaire and adopted NREW's processes of data collection and analysis. The questionnaire was disseminated to all participant groups (i.e., service users, families/friends/carers, staff and music therapists) as appropriate across all NRS services (33 services; 330 completed questionnaires).

Phase B focused on exploring the extent to which the implementation of the IAQ and of the related data collection and analysis processes (Phase A) is applicable and transferable beyond NREW, in this case within the NRS context. NRS music therapists participated in one of two focus group discussions (Glasgow, n=5; Edinburgh, n=7). In these discussions, they provided feedback regarding the IAQ and the perceived fit with their work. Following the focus groups all music therapists completed an online survey where they indicated the perceived relevance/irrelevance of the impact areas per different work settings as well as made suggestions for new impact areas.

This study promotes an ecological perspective considering music therapy's impact not only on service users, but also on families/carers/friends, staff, and the organisational context in its entirety. Research findings can lead to the potential use of the IAQ in diverse settings and inform knowledge

¹ The two charities merged in October 2018 and since then they have been following a unified service evaluation framework.

and policy making in the field.

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The research findings have been disseminated through academic publications (see related publications below) and numerous national and international conference presentations. The full research findings will be published in a journal article which is currently under review. Further plans for dissemination include presentations at the 2020 World Music Therapy Congress in South Africa and the 2020 ISME Commission on Special Music Education and Music Therapy in Finland.

This service evaluation study informs future work around the relationship of service evaluation with clinical assessment and impact measurement in and around music therapy.

Related publications:

Tsirir, G., Spiro, N., Coggins, O., & Zubala, A. (under review). The Impact Areas Questionnaire (IAQ): A music therapy service evaluation tool.

Tsirir, G. (2020). Book review: "Music therapy assessment: Theory, research, and application" (Jacobsen, Waldon & Gattino, Eds.). *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy*. Advance online publication.

Tsirir, G., & McLachlan, J. (2019). Evaluating music therapy services in children's hospices. In A. Ludwig (Ed.), *Music therapy in children's palliative care* (pp. 67-85). London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.