**The Music Therapy Charity: Funding Report**

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**The musical experiences of people with aphasia: A phenomenological thematic analysis**

The Music Therapy charity supported costs of this research for my MA Music Therapy dissertation at UWE Bristol. The research took place during the 2018-19 academic year and the final dissertation was submitted in September 2019. The findings will be disseminated in an accessible, aphasia friendly summary to the participants and charitable organisations for people with aphasia. The research was also presented at the British Aphasiology Society Symposium in September 2019 and was voted by delegates as the best ‘lightning talk’ of the day.

The grant covered the following costs:

* Travel to interviews with participants (£330)
* Room hire for interviews (£80)
* Purchase of equipment and stationery to create resources for supported conversation to be used in interviews (£40)

Background: Aphasia is a disorder of language following acquired brain injury. Research into music and aphasia has largely focused on music-based treatment methods for the language disorder, but what role does musicking (the participation in music making and listening and the interpersonal relationships inherent within this) play in the wider lives of people with aphasia (PWA)? What does music mean to them in the context of having aphasia?

Methodology: Semi-structured interviews were carried out with nine adults with acquired aphasia, using Supported Conversation to assist communication. Phenomenologically informed thematic analysis was used to analyse verbatim transcripts, including the researcher’s and participants’ reflections on singing and shared music listening within the interviews.

Results: Three overarching themes were identified: speaking vs singing, musicking in recovery and musicking together. Participants discussed how musicking can be an escape from their busy schedule of rehabilitation and therapy, can connect them with peers with aphasia and their families, and can form part of personally meaningful rehabilitation goals.

Implications for practice: the writeup includes reflections on how clinicians can communicate the disconnect between singing and speaking to newly diagnosed people with aphasia, and support the development of a new identity through musicking, considering the unique nature of each person’s relationship with music.

The grant has allowed me to travel to include people with aphasia in the research and to represent their lived experiences to music therapists, speech and language therapists and people running community groups for people with aphasia. I plan to use the experience gained through this research project to carry out further research alongside my clinical practice and to contribute to the evidence base for music therapy.