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Music Education as an Intervention in Seriously Violent Men with Schizophrenia in a Uk High Secure Hospital: the Patient's Perspective

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Introduction

There is mounting evidence that music therapy can be beneficial in mental disorders. Whilst there is much literature on its role in psychiatry, there is little research on the place of music education and moreover, in a forensic setting.

Objectives

To determine how patients with a history of serious violence and difficulties in engagement experience music education and to review its place within the recovery model in a high secure psychiatric hospital.

Aims

Qualitatively, to consider the role of music education from the perspective of a forensic psychiatric patient and to determine impact on clinical outcome.

Method

Semi-structured interviews explored three areas with six patients; past exposure to music, involvement in the music department and reflection upon the experience. Case histories were compiled through retrospective data collection via electronic records.

Results

Opportunity to overcome difficulties such as violent episodes, a sense of empowerment through achievement and instilling of hope were emergent key themes. Creating music was described as a means of enabling expression of topics difficult to verbalise. The skills and mind-set nurtured were considered a foundation for vocational work. Therapeutic benefit extended to the wider team, manifest as increased willingness to engage.

Conclusions

We demonstrate that music education can play a significant role in recovery and furthermore, in patients that present a unique set of challenges. Future studies could increase sample size and consider objective measures to additionally demonstrate benefit. In the context of a multi-disciplinary approach this may well impact on planning services in the future.