

ENGLISH SUMMARY

The aim of this PhD study is to explore the influence of non-symbolic microprocesses in time-limited intersubjective child psychotherapy through a musical frame. It builds on microanalytic research, from infant development and music therapy, demonstrating how musical elements can describe and illuminate variations in emotional expressions and relationship qualities. There are until now few studies applying a microanalytic 'musical' approach to investigate therapeutic interplay with children referred to mental health services.

Problems with emotion regulation are found in a wide range of diagnoses, affecting the quality of children's lives. Therefore, the facilitation of emotion regulation is a central goal for child psychotherapy. Knowledge from developmental research shows how affective, non-symbolic reciprocal moment-to-moment interplay underlie and organize self-developmental processes.

Based on previous research findings and knowledge from infant research with reference to musical parameters, such as vocalizations, timbre, pitch, melodic contour, intensity, rhythm and tempo, as concrete descriptions of intersubjective exchanges, this PhD study aimed at investigating the following three main research questions through a phenomenological hermeneutic approach:

1. Can musical parameters be useful to capture intersubjective exchanges between therapist and child – and if so, how?
2. Can a description of musical parameters, within a multilayered frame, illuminate intersubjective microprocesses – and if so, how?
3. Can a phenomenological description and a hermeneutic interpretation of musical parameters, clarify therapeutic interplay and basic developmental processes such as emotion regulation in child psychotherapy – and if so, how?

Two emotion regulation samples of therapeutic interplay with six children, from an early and a late therapy session, are analysed. Applying a qualitative explorative approach, a multi-layered research procedure was firstly developed, including a musical framework as well as a psychological (Johns, 2018). The musical frame is a registration of vocal, rhythmical, dynamic and temporal changes as concrete descriptions of the specificity of therapeutic exchanges, as these unfold. The concept of musical dynamics is suggested as a description of lived relationship experiences over time.

Data were drawn from a mixed-method multicentre study, taking place at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim and at a child- and youth psychiatric outpatient clinic at Akershus University Hospital in Oslo. Research target was changes in emotion regulation in children 9-13 (36) with diagnoses within the internalizing spectrum. Controls (28) were recruited from local schools in Trondheim. Participants were assessed before and after therapy with multiple methods, including psychophysiological measures, which are not a topic for this PhD. Assessment with the Affect Consciousness Interview (ACI) were administered before and after therapy, to obtain objective measures of affect integration. These measures were applied as validation of findings and are described in article 2 in the PhD.

The qualitative multi-layered microanalysis revealed some patterns across samples which demonstrate how a musical dynamics-based description embody and clarify the child's activity, emotional expressions and intentions as well as illuminate intersubjective exchanges.

Findings from the Affect Conscious Interview (ACI) for each of the six children in the study, compared to the non-clinical control group, indicate increased affect integration and development of emotion regulation capability towards an age adequate status. These findings support an understanding of time-limited child psychotherapy as a frame for developmentally directed intersubjective microprocesses.

This PhD study contributes to clinical research and practice within child psychotherapy by showing how a musical dynamics-based description, as part of a multi-layered microanalysis, can clarify the specificity of both the child's and therapist's activity, enabling intersubjective sharing and self-development. A focus on the musical dynamics

of therapeutic activity can further contribute to therapeutic development by sensitizing therapists to qualities in their own activity, which promote responsivity to the child.

The thesis consists of two articles. The first describes the development of the microanalytic research procedure, and the other paper presents and discusses findings. As part of the multicenter study, a handbook was written on the treatment method, integrating research findings and is included together with a linking text. A summary of the handbook is written as part of the description of the therapy method.

LIST OF PHD PUBLICATIONS

Johns, U.T. (2018). Exploring musical dynamics in therapeutic interplay with children: A multilayered method of microanalysis. *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy*, 27 (3), 197-217.

Johns, U.T. (submitted 2018). A study of musical dynamics in therapeutic interplay with children: 'The important thing was to be understood through tone of voice and movements'.

Johns, U.T. & Svendsen, B. (2016). *Håndbok i Tidsavgrenset Intersubjektiv Barneterapi (TIB). Kunnskapsgrunnlag, behandlingsprinsipper og eksempler*. [Handbook in Time-Limited Intersubjective Child Psychotherapy (TIC): Knowledge base, Treatment Principles and Examples]. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.