

MUSIC PROGRAMS WITH TEENS IN CORRECTIONAL SETTINGS IN THE  
UNITED STATES: A SCOPING REVIEW

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Master of Music

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by

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## ABSTRACT

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Music therapy is increasingly being offered in adult prison units to curb recidivism rates and to address mental health concerns. However, there appears to be insufficient research on how music therapy might benefit teen inmates. The purpose of this scoping review is to synthesize the available literature regarding music therapy treatment and music programs with teens in correctional settings. Due to the lack of music therapy specific research available on this topic, this study extends its search out to all music and arts-based programs with a primary focus on music. After applying to this study's topic, the scoping review framework provided by Arksey and O'Mally (2002), total of three publications met the criteria for review.

All three of the articles identified and described programs that were implemented in youth detention facilities. Each program was facilitated by professionals in their field such as music theater professionals, a choir director, and a music educator. However, none of the programs were facilitated or were aided by therapists. Several strengths and weaknesses were identified in the articles which included the strength-based approach, absence of a control group, therapeutic education level of the facilitators, participant characteristics, pod personality, and external incentives.

**KEY WORDS:** Music therapy, Music programs, Teens, Incarceration, Prison, Adolescents

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I would also like to thank the librarian in the Criminal Justice Center at Sam Houston State University for assisting me with finding and choosing databases in which to search for articles. Additionally, I would like to thank my parents and friends for believing in me and supporting me throughout this process.

## **PREFACE**

I attended Sam Houston State University where I obtained my Bachelor of Music in Music Therapy. I completed my internship at Cunningham Children's Home in Urbana, Illinois. I then came back to Sam Houston State University to complete my Master of Music in Music Therapy. During my Master's degree, I worked as a contract music therapist in a psychiatric hospital and a rehabilitation center.

While attending Sam Houston for my undergraduate degree, I had the opportunity to participate in a three-week intensive practicum placement located in a local prison. I worked with a group of about 12 individuals ages 15 to 17 for three hours a day. During this time, several other Sam Houston State University students and I helped prepare the incarcerated individuals for a weekly performance for the prison staff. As this took a lot of time to teach the individuals how to play instruments and the different songs, we did not have time to use other types of interventions in this setting.

This thesis was written for music therapists who are interested in the current research regarding music programs with teens in correctional settings within the United States.

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **Introduction**

At any given point, roughly 1% of the United States adult population resides in the prison system, and this is one of the highest incarceration rates of any country in the world (Prison Policy Initiative, n.d.). While the majority of these two million incarcerated individuals are held in state prisons, some also reside in local jails, federal prisons, immigration detention, community treatment centers, restitution centers, and mental health facilities (CFR 115.5, n.d.). Regardless of facility type, common thread between them is that each location holds individuals who have been, or are pending, conviction of a state or federal crime(s) (USLegal, n.d.). According to the Federal Bureau of Prisons, the most common offenses amongst inmates include drug offenses (46.1%), weapons, explosives, arson (20.7%), and sex offenses (11.2%) (2021). Despite many efforts throughout the years to decrease or limit incarceration of minors, these statistics also include children and adolescents in addition to adults.

Throughout history, children as young as 8 years old have been tried and convicted as adults within the court system. Only recently, in 2005, legal protections have been put in place to limit the death penalty for children. As late as 2010, have some juveniles life-without-parole sentences been reconsidered (Children in adult prison, n.d.). While many children and adolescents do get tried and convicted despite their age, there are some differences between juvenile corrections and adult correction systems. For example, and while variations exist between various state and local jurisdictions, the adult facilities typically have a primary focus on punishment and a secondary focus on

rehabilitation while juvenile facilities have a primary focus on rehabilitation and a secondary focus on punishment (Rosenthal Kalabus Therrian law firm, *n.d.*).

Due to the juvenile facilities' primary focus on rehabilitation, there are many programs that are offered in juvenile facilities which are meant to address rehabilitative goals, and the facility structures are also set up to address this aim. For example, rehabilitative-focused programs for juveniles often includes smaller enrollment, five hours of academics per day and various cognitive restructuring programs (Radek Gadek, 2010). While not all juvenile prisons offer the same programs, some offer music and art programs, which brings us to the need for this study.

### **Need for the Study**

The amount of music therapy specific literature focused on adolescents who are incarcerated is minimal at best. However, music therapists are not the only professionals who facilitate music-based programs with this age group in prison settings. Therefore, this study extends its search out to all music and arts-based programs that are implemented in the juvenile justice system. In doing so, a more compressive overview of what kinds of music-based programs already exist in this setting can help answer the research questions. Collecting, analyzing, and describing the current state of literature will also help to identify trends and important information that can enhance future research and practice. The researcher expects many of these programs to be facilitated by non-music therapists with a focus on recidivism rates.

## **Overview of the Scoping Review Process**

A scoping review format was chosen over a systematic review due to the lack of articles and studies that exist on this topic. A scoping review will allow for a broader overview of what studies and articles currently exist.

Scoping reviews, overall, are designed to be precursors to a more focused study or a systematic review. Specifically, scoping reviews aim to synthesize available literature in regards to a specified topic. Four reasons that a scoping review might be undertaken include: examining the extent and range of the research, as a precursor to a full systematic review, to summarize research findings, and to identify gaps within the existing literature. This study specifically aims to summarize research findings in regards to music therapy treatment and music programs with teens in correctional settings (Munn, Peters, Stern, Tufanaru, McArthur, and Aromataris, 2018).

This study followed the Arksey and O'Malley framework (2002) which includes five mandatory steps and one optional step. The five steps are as follows: (1) identifying the research questions, (2) identifying the relevant studies, (3) selecting and reviewing the relevant studies, (4) charting the data, (5) "collating, summarizing, and reporting the results," (6 – optional) "Consultation Exercise" (Cacchione, 2016).

## **Purpose for the Study**

The purpose of this scoping review is to synthesize the available literature regarding music therapy treatment and music programs with teens in correctional settings by identifying the types of information available, key characteristics, and gaps in the knowledge base. Given this, the research questions are as follows: **(a)** What are the strengths and weaknesses for using music in this setting? **(b)** What types of evidence

exist regarding music programs with adolescents in correctional settings in the United States? **(c)** What are the key characteristics of adolescent members who participate in programs? **(d)** What are the key characteristics of the facilitators of music programs? **(e)** What are the key characteristics of the music programs being used? **(f)** What are the gaps and limitations in the literature on music programs?

## **CHAPTER II**

### **Method**

Following the identification of the research questions, Arksey and O'Malley (2002), state that relevant studies should be identified and reviewed. This chapter covers steps two and three in the scoping review process: identifying the relevant studies and selecting and reviewing the relevant studies (Cacchione, 2016). In order to accomplish this, research terms, databases, and inclusion/exclusion criteria were identified. The relevant studies were then identified and put into a table.

#### **Research Terms and Databases**

In order to find relevant articles, the researcher started by identifying preliminary search terms. The researcher used the purpose statement and came up with the search terms music, incarcerated, and teens. From there, a thesaurus was used to determine what words might be used in place of the original search terms. Additionally, the researcher looked at a variety of publications on the same or similar population. These terms were also included as to not leave out any relevant articles. All the identified search terms are included in Table 1 below.

**Table 1***Search Terms*

Search Line	Terms
Line 1	Music OR Music Program OR Music Therapy OR Arts OR Arts Programs
Line 2	Incarcerated* OR Incarceration OR Prison OR Prison System OR Detention Centers OR Correction*
Line 3	Adolescents OR Teens OR Youth OR Youth Offenders

*Note.* The \* was used to have the database include similar words with different endings (such as, incarcerated or incarceration).

These search terms were put into a variety of databases in order to find all the potential relevant articles. To determine what databases to use, the researcher consulted with a criminal justice subjective librarian at Sam Houston State University. Based on this consultation, the researcher selected the following databases: Psyc Info, Socindex, Medline, and Criminal Justice (CJ) Abstracts. The original list of databases to use also included Engine Orange, Google Scholar, ProQuest Advanced Search, JSTOR, and Sciencedirect. However, after the librarian consultation, the researcher determined that these would not be applicable databases to search, due to how each one searches a wide variety of databases, including many irrelevant ones. This decision was also indicated based on the number of relevant versus non-relevant articles that came up within the first hundred articles per database. The databases that were used were included in this study due to their inclusion of journals representing a wide range of disciplines as well as the number of relevant versus non-relevant articles that were found during the initial database search.

## Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

In order to eliminate articles that are not relevant to the topic, inclusion and exclusion criteria were identified. The researcher determined that all articles should include a music program where the majority of the program utilized music to achieve predetermined goals. The program should take place in the United States due to differences in justice systems in different countries. The music program should also have occurred in a correctional setting rather than a mental hospital or other non-correctional setting, and all should be implemented in a teen offenders' unit. In addition, exclusion criteria include articles that are in languages other than English. All inclusion and exclusion criteria can be found in Tables 2 and 3 below.

**Table 2**

### *Inclusion Criteria*

Category	Inclusion
Location	The program discussed in the articles should have been located within the United States.
Population	Teen offenders ages 13-17*
Setting	The program must be implemented in the correctional setting.
Primary Program Focus	The article must talk about a music specific program.
Language	English
Types of Articles	The article is in the form of a case study, case report, research study, clinical practice guideline that includes a program description.
	The article is a full text article

*Note.* \* articles that extend outside this age range will be included as long as it mentions that it includes individuals within this age range.

**Table 3***Exclusion Criteria*

Category	Exclusion
Location	The program discussed in the article must not be located outside of the United States.
Population	The program is implemented only in age groups outside the 13-17 range.
Setting	The program should not be implemented in a mental hospital, community treatment center, or other non-correctional setting.
Primary Program Focus	The program is not primarily music based.

*Note.* This table identifies all of the exclusion criteria.

This scoping review specifically examined at articles based in the United States due to differences in the justice systems which may affect the goals for the music program and/or the outcome. This scoping review also focuses on the correctional setting, which includes state prisons, local jails, and federal prisons, despite the fact that some incarcerated youth also reside in juvenile justice centers, community treatment centers, and restitution centers (CFR 115.5, n.d.). This is due to the predicted difference in goal areas for the music program and desired outcomes.

Community treatment centers are included in the exclusion criteria due to how they often treat individuals with severe mental illness and who are “most at-risk of psychiatric crisis and hospitalization and involvement in the criminal justice system” (Assertive Community Treatment, 2021). Common goal areas for individuals in community treatment centers include decreasing mental health related symptoms and improving quality of life (Assertive Community Treatment, 2021).

Restitution centers are also included in the exclusion criteria due to how they are facilities that offer an alternative way for incarcerated individuals to pay back their sentence. Restitution centers are generally residential and are only offered to nonviolent offenders. Restitution centers provide a way to enforce “the payment of restitution by offender” (Restitution Centers, 2019). Common goal areas for individuals in restitution centers include paying off restitution.

Comparatively, for the included state and federal prisons and local jails, goals for these locations include providing “productive use-of-time activities,” reintegration into society, and other inmate needs (Justice Management Division, 2021).

The program should also have been implemented in a youth or teen unit which, for the purposes of this study, will be between the ages of 13 and 17. While this study targets this specific age range, articles that also include individuals within a two-to-three-year age gap older or younger than 13 or 17 will not be excluded. In addition, articles that do not specify an age range but do indicate that it includes high school age individuals or adolescents will also be included due to the typical age range of a high schooler being 14-18 years of age and adolescents typically referring to teens.

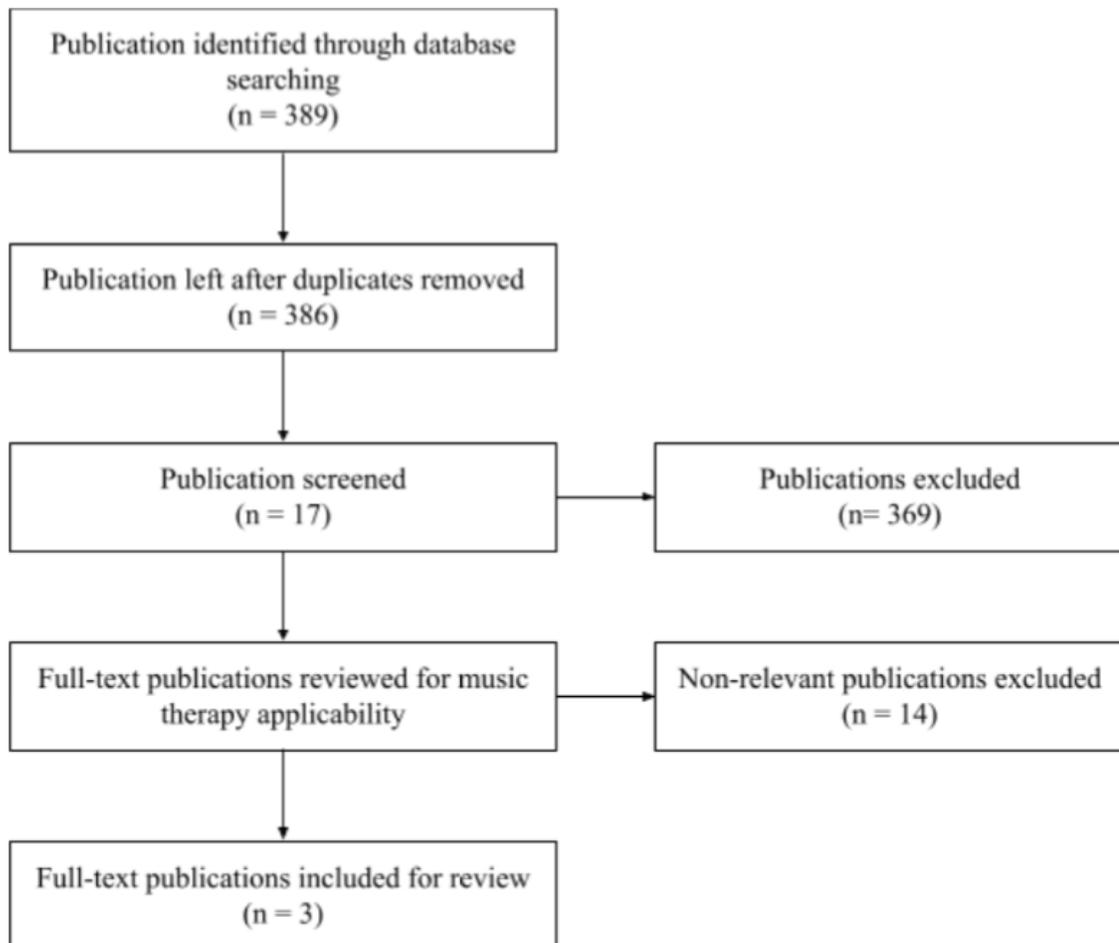
The article should include a music specific program where the majority of the program utilizes music to achieve predetermined goals. The focus of the programs should primarily be music due to the intended aim of this scoping review. This scoping review also included programs facilitated by non-music therapists that primarily include music-focused interventions or experiences due to a lack of preexisting music therapy specific articles.

## **Study Selection**

The initial search of each database yielded the following results: Criminal Justice (CJ) Abstracts contained 47 results, Medline contained 135 results, Socindex contained 50 results, and Psyc Info contained 157 results. This came out to a total of 389 initial results. Three duplicates were found which brought the total down to 386 results. The researcher then looked at keywords and abstracts for each article and found 17 potentially relevant articles. The researcher then read through each of these articles and used the inclusion and exclusion criteria to determine the final selection of relevant articles. At this stage, 14 articles were eliminated which left three relevant articles. A breakdown of the inclusion and exclusion process can be found in the following figure:

**Figure 1**

*Flow Chart for the Included and Excluded Articles*



*Note.* The above figure indicates how many articles were kept and discarded during each phase of screening.

## CHAPTER III

### Results

Three articles were identified according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The first one, “We all Come Together to Learn About Music”: A Qualitative Analysis of a 5-Year Music Program in a Juvenile Detention Facility by Maud Hickey (2018), was found in Criminal Justice (CJ) Abstracts and Psyc Info databases and is published in the International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology. The second article, Dramatic Healing: The Evolution of a Trauma-Informed Musical Theatre Program for Incarcerated Girls by Meade Palidofsky and Bradley Stolbach (2012), was found in the Socindex database and is published in the Journal of Child & Adolescent Trauma. The third article, Music and Juvenile Justice: A Dynamic Systems Perspective by Dennie Wolf and Steven Holochwost (2016), was found in the Psyc Info database and is published in Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts.

Three different types of music programs were discussed in the articles found. One was a music composition program, another was a musical theater program, and the last was choir. Below is a table with a breakdown of each article including all the following information: article ID number, author/year, publication type, purpose of the program, facilitator characteristics, teen participant characteristics, and a description of the program. This is followed by a narrative of each article, which delves into specifics about each article in relation to this study’s research questions.

**Table 4***Publication Characteristics*

Description of the Program	Teen Participant Characteristics	Facilitator Characteristics	Purpose of the Program	Publication Type	Author/Year	Article ID Number
The program consisted of 10 weekly sessions which lasted 1.5 hours each. During each session, participants discussed goals for that week which included discussions listening to music examples which served to "enhance the lesson." For the rest of each session, participants worked on their personal music projects using MIDI keyboards and Garage Band.	Ages 13-18 Either legal action pending or temporarily held for minor offenses in 2012 there were 250 residents of which 84% Black, 12% Latino, and 3% White	Music educator	To determine the reason behind the positive responses from participants in the program	Peer Review Article	Maud Hickey, 2018	1
The Fabulous Females program is a musical theater program where theater professionals work with incarcerated female youth for approximately 12 weeks to create, develop, and perform musicals based on their personal experiences. Each session begins with goal setting and an emotional check-in. The check-in helps to determine the pace for the rest of the session. If, in large, the group states that they are angry or depressed, the group will spend some time playing games before working on creating/performing their musicals	This program initially started in public school systems before moving into juvenile detention centers. The first few times the program was held in the juvenile detention center, the program was mainly for male or co-ed groups before the female only program was created	Theater professionals	The initial purpose of the program was focused on attitudes, beliefs, and decision-making skills in regard to stressful or traumatic experiences. The purpose grew into focusing on the "complex trauma histories" and the relationship of those experiences to present relationships	Peer Review Article	Meade Palidofsky and Bradley Stolbach, 2012	2

Description of the Program	Teen Participant Characteristics	Facilitator Characteristics	Purpose of the Program	Publication Type	Author/Year	Article ID Number
This choral residency program took place over the span of two weeks and consisted of twelve 2-to-3-hour sessions. Throughout the program, participants learned songs which emphasized resilience and the possibility of social change and wrote original songs with similar topics.	This study included 54 adolescents of which 20 were female and 34 were male. All of which were between the ages of 14 and 17 years of	Director of a professional choir	The purpose of this study was to determine if participation in a music-based program would improve internal strengths such as engagement, self-esteem, and mood in incarcerated youth.	Peer Review Article	Dennie Wolf and Steven Holochwost, 2016	3

**Hickey, 2018**

The study by Hickey (2018) reviews the effectiveness of a music composition program implemented in a local detention center. The program took place over a span of five years from 2010 to 2015. The youth at this setting are generally held due to legal action pending, temporarily for minor offenses, or are being held until they turn 18 and can be transferred to the adult unit. Participants in the program ranged from age 13 to 18 years of age. In the year 2012, 84% of the participants were Black, 12% were Latino, and 3% were White, the majority of which were male (91%).

This music composition program saw over 700 youth during the five years it was running. The program was designed with a strength-based approach in mind. Specifically, this program used the positive youth development (PYD) approach which aids in strengthening the participants' sense of identity "as positive beings" rather than continuing to engage in negative behaviors. Each program consisted of approximately 10 weekly sessions lasting 1.5 hours each. During each session, participants discussed goals for that week which included a topic for the session, discussions regarding the topic, and listening to music examples. For the remainder of the sessions, participants worked on their personal music projects using MIDI keyboards and GarageBand.

The purpose of this study was to determine participants' reactions to the program and determine the effectiveness of using PYD and music composition in this setting. In order to determine the program's effectiveness, the author used a qualitative analysis which consisted of "feedback sheets," interviews, and the author's reflective journaling. The program received an overwhelming amount of positive feedback with an emphasis on competence (learning or creating something new), positive feeling, and challenge.

Many of the responses in this study focused more on the positive effects of learning and creating rather than the type of music. Therefore, the author indicates that future research should “investigate the differences in impact depending on the type of music genre used.” The author states that another gap in research is the lack of abundance of music programs in youth detention centers. The author indicates that a “crucial first step” is to learn more about music in youth detention centers.

### **Palidofsky and Stolback, 2012**

The study by Palidofsky and Stolback (2012) walks through the creation of a female music theater program. In this program, theater professionals work with incarcerated teens to create, develop, and perform musicals based on their personal experiences. The program was first implemented in a juvenile detention center in 1990 where the participants mostly consisted of male detained teens. From there, the program evolved into co-ed and then to a girls only program.

This program lasted for approximately 12 weeks in which the youth delve into the play writing process before putting on a show using the stories they wrote. Each session began with goal setting and an emotional check-in. The check-in served to determine the pace for the rest of the session. If, in large, the group states that they are angry or depressed, the group will spend some time playing games before working on creating/performing their musicals.

The purpose of this program was to initially focus on attitudes, beliefs, and decision-making skills in regards to stressful or traumatic experiences. The purpose then grew into focusing on the participants “complex trauma histories” and the relationship of those experiences to present relationships. The facilitators work to create a safe space

where participants can share traumatic experiences and process through them by allowing the teens to develop and create a musical play about their experience. The facilitators found that an overwhelming majority of stories focused on the topic of trauma and abuse. Due to this, one of the goals of the program became to help the teen participants focus on the choices that were made in their experiences and the consequences that followed, rather than the positive or negative associations with the events.

Over the years, the facilitators found that the most effective musical theater program was gender-specific and highly trauma informed. That being said, the authors note that not a lot of literature on trauma exposure leading to criminal offenses or mental health care for incarcerated youth exists. Due to this, the author indicates that more research on this topic would be beneficial.

### **Wolf and Holochwost, 2016**

The study by Wolf and Holochwost (2016) evaluated the correlation between participation in a choir and internal strengths and behavior changes. The program took place in two local detention facilities. Out of the 54 participants, 20 of them were female and 34 were male, all of which were between the ages of 14 and 17 years. The youth at this setting were generally awaiting adjudication. They were held at this setting primarily due to the severity of the crime or because there was reason to believe the youth would not appear in court.

The program consisted of 12 sessions over two weeks. Each session lasted roughly 2 to 3 hours and was led by a professional choir director. All participants volunteered for the program and all but two completed the program. Additionally, six

members of the same choir, led by the choir director, and two teaching artists, assisted with the group.

The purpose of this study was to determine if participation in a music-based program would improve internal strengths such as engagement, self-esteem, and mood in incarcerated youth. Throughout the program, participants learned songs which emphasized resilience and the possibility of social change, and wrote original songs with similar topics. The program concluded with a full dress rehearsal and concert.

Two limitations discussed by the authors included small sample size and the absence of a control group. It is common with this population to have a relatively small sample size. One solution the author brings up is that more detention centers can be included in subsequent studies. However, that allows for further limitations such as adding in more variables such as backgrounds and seriousness of prior offenses. While the authors of this study determined that a control group was not ethically possible in this setting, it does pose a limitation as it hinders the researchers ability to claim that the changes observed were due to participation in the choir and not some other factors. The authors indicate that future studies should include larger sample sizes.

## **Summary**

### ***Key Characteristics of Teen Participants***

Given that only 2 out of 3 articles discuss characteristics of the teen participants, there is not enough identifying information to determine any commonalities between characteristics. However, both articles indicate that the majority of the participants' population are males. The article by Hickey (2018) also goes into details regarding demographics, including race, which stated that in 2012, 84% were Black, 12% were

Latino, and 3% were White. Additionally, the articles by Hickey (2018) and Wolf and Holochwost (2016) discuss the reason and locations of the incarcerated youth. This included youth that were awaiting adjudication due to the severity of the crime or if it was believed that the youth would not appear in court, or temporarily held for minor offenses, or waiting to be transferred to the adult unit. All three facilities mentioned were detention centers.

### ***Key Characteristics of the Facilitators of the Music Programs***

By in large, the facilitators of each of these programs were professionals in their own respected field, but were not music therapists. The music composition program (Hickey 2018) was created and led by a music educator. The music theater program (Palidofsky and Stolback, 2012) was led by theater professionals. Lastly, the choir program (Wolf and Holochwost, 2016) was led by a professional choir director.

### ***Key Characteristics of the Music Programs***

While each program has its differences, there were many key characteristics that remained the same between the three studies. The average number of sessions conducted for each program was 11.33, each lasting an average of 2.25 hours. Common ways music was incorporated throughout the programs was music creation (Hickey, 2018; Palidofsky and Stolback, 2012; Wolf and Holochwost, 2016), music performance (Hickey, 2018; Palidofsky and Stolback, 2012; Wolf and Holochwost, 2016), and music listening (Hickey 2018). Types of music used in the sessions included pre-composed songs, original compositions, and original musical theater songs. The primary goal of each program included determining the reason behind positive responses, past trauma and the link between the experiences to present relationships, and improving internal strengths

such as self-esteem and mood. One notable inconsistency between each program is the frequency of sessions. Two of the programs state that the sessions were held weekly (Hickey, 2018; Palidofsky and Stolback, 2012) while the choir program states that all 12 sessions were held within two weeks (Wolf and Holochwost, 2016).

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **Discussion**

According to Arksey and O'Malley, the next step in a scoping review is step 5 "collating, summarizing, and reporting the results. Chapter four addresses this final step in the scoping review process by discussing strengths and weaknesses, presenting evidence regarding using music with this population, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

#### **Variations and Similarities Between Studies**

The three studies in this thesis are similar in many regards; however, there are also many notable differences between each one. The following is a list of various similarities and differences between each program: the correlation between participation rates and frequency of sessions, the focus of collaboration and socialization, reasons participants are in the program, and written agreement to participate.

A notable difference between the programs is the frequency of sessions. Two programs saw clients weekly for approximately 10 to 12 sessions while one program saw participants 12 times within a two-week span. The frequency of sessions also appears to be correlated to the participation rate of participants. The programs that met weekly saw a greater number of participants from session to session compared to the program that met more frequently.

One commonality between all three programs is that each musical experience promoted collaboration and socialization. For example, in the article by Palidofsky and Stolbach (2012), the musical theater program addressed collaboration between group members in order to put on the storytelling performances, in addition to the primary goal

of “emotional development through personal storytelling” (Palidofsky and Stolbach, 2012).

Another notable difference of the music programs is the reason participants engaged in the program. Two out of three articles indicated that participation was on a volunteer basis (Wolf and Holochwost, 2016; Palidofsky and Stolbach, 2012). However, the study by Wolf and Holochwost (2016) indicates that some of the participants received school credit for participating in the choir program. This, in turn, provides additional incentive for participation in the program which could unintentionally affect the results of the program.

Another difference between the studies is the inclusion of a signed contract. Two out of three of the articles had their participants create and sign contracts detailing the group responsibilities, group expectations, and the expectation of a confidential space. This could pose as a strength or a weakness due to how it provides structure to the group and helps create a safe space for participants to share experiences. However, this could potentially be off putting to some individuals who see a contract as threatening.

### **Evidence Regarding Using Music with this Population**

According to Rosenthal Kalabus Therrian Law Firm (n.d.), the primary focus for juvenile detention facilities is rehabilitation. This, in and of itself, indicates that music therapy could be a potential candidate for addressing this population’s needs. Further indication for using music as a therapeutic tool for incarcerated teens was found in the overwhelming amount of positive responses in the music programs discussed in the above articles. In the qualitative study by Hickey (2018), the researcher analyzed the overall positive response to a music composition program. The researcher found that

when participants discussed the music program, the majority of responses from the participants included how it gave them an opportunity to create something and learn something new.

In the study by Palidofsky and Stolbach (2012), the researcher indicates that the theater programs overall success is likely attributed to being run by outside professionals rather than unit staff, voluntary participation, “the emphasis on creating community and on the commonality of traumatic experiences,” the opportunity to create and produce something, and that creating and putting on a show is a positive uplifting experience.

In the study by Wolf and Holochwost (2016), the researchers state that participation in the choir program was positively associated with “perceived social environment and antisocial behavior.” The researchers also noted that participants indicated spending a considerable amount of time (an extra 1-3 hours) outside the music program working on music activities. Nearly 3/4ths of the participants also indicated that they experienced “feeling more positively about either their self-esteem, engagement, or mood while making music.”

### **Strengths and Weaknesses**

There are several notable program strengths and weaknesses described in the articles. These strengths and weaknesses include the strength-based approach, the frequency and duration of sessions, therapeutic education level of the facilitators, pod personality, and external incentives. Each of these strengths and weaknesses should be noted and taken into consideration when creating the foundation for future research on this topic.

The most notable strength is the strength-based approach that two out of three of the programs took. This is a widely recognized approach to psychotherapy where the therapist works with the client to identify and label positive characteristics rather than negative ones (Rashid 2015). The positive interactions brought about through the strength-based approach fosters a positive experience between participants and unit staff as indicated in the study by Wolf and Holochwost (2016). The strength-based approaches seen in these articles are believed to have positively impacted the results.

Another notable strength is the frequency and duration of each program. Each article indicated that they were able to meet consistently. Maintaining regular meeting times in this setting can be difficult due to various outside factors. For example, the unit may need to go on lockdown for a viral outbreak or for a contraband search. Each program also noted that sessions lasted a minimum of 1.5 hours. This is a strength because they were able to spend a large amount of uninterrupted time working on various projects.

A notable weakness is the therapeutic education level of the facilitators. While professionals in their respective fields, it is not indicated in any of the articles that the facilitators have a background in therapy or music therapy, or that the facilitators were aided by therapists in the music making process. The lack of a therapist involved in program development could potentially change the way in which a music program is created compared to if the program is developed with therapist involvement. The creation of a music therapy program starts with setting goals. Music is then incorporated to facilitate the therapeutic goals. Whereas, an arts or music based program may begin by incorporating music, resulting in the added benefit of therapeutic outcomes. A music

therapist will also implement music and musical interventions in a way that either decreases the potential for harm or eliminates the possibility of harm all together.

Facilitators who are not credentialed therapists should have a therapists support to ensure participants' psychological safety throughout.

Another weakness indicated in the article by Hickey (2018) is pod personality.

Pod personality refers to the way in which group dynamics affect the overall mood of the group. A negative pod personality may result in the inability to participate in the music making process. Unit staff could make the decision to revoke the privilege to attend the music group based on the individuals demeanor and attitude.

As indicated above, reasons participants engage in the program vary between studies. This variation makes it different to ascertain if positive impacts of group participation are due to the music experience themselves or due to the possibility of external incentives. One article (Wold and Holochwost, 2016) indicated that some participants received school credit for participating in the music program, creating a strong external incentive to participate. External incentives were not indicated by the other two articles; however, if incentives were used, it would potentially affect the outcomes of the group.

### **Scoping Review Limitations**

Limitations within this scoping review include the overall lack of research on music therapy or music programs for incarcerated teens. All three of the articles note the lack of research on this topic, stating that more research should be conducted on how trauma exposure might lead to criminal offending (Palidofsky and Stolbach, 2012).

Additionally, little is known regarding using arts or music with incarcerated youth, (Wolf and Holochwost, 2016).

One limitation with conducting studies with this population is that it is not always ethical to have a control group to compare the effects of music group participation to non-music group participation. Youth in this setting are a part of two at-risk groups, minors and incarcerated individuals. However, without a control group to compare, it is difficult to ascertain the true impact of the group since various factors to influence the outcome of the program.

An additional limitation is the lack of information provided on the characteristics of the participants and facilitators between each article. Only two out of three articles discuss the characteristics of the participants. The article by Hickey (2018), goes into detail regarding the specific demographics from the year including race. They stated that 84% of participants were Black, 12% were Latino, and 3% were White. In regards to demographics, the article by Palidofsky and Stolbach (2012) states that their program consisted of only female participants. The final article (Wolf and Holochwost, 2016), did not indicate any characteristics of the participants. The only characteristic mentioned in all three articles regarding the facilitators was their occupation. This can be considered a limitation because only one article described in depth the characteristics of participant demographics of their study, and none of the articles described specific characteristics of the facilitators. Including this information in the articles would assist individuals hoping to develop their own programs to effectively develop their own approaches while taking into account previous literature.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

This scoping review study found positive results from music programs implemented in the juvenile justice system. However, further research should be conducted in regards to trauma on incarceration rates, funding for facilitators, and the importance of the musical genre versus the creative/learning experience.

There are still several unknowns regarding facilitating a music program with incarcerated youth. One such unknown is the full effects of trauma on incarceration rates. The article by Palidofsky and Stolbach (2012) also indicates that this is a primary topic of concern as it might affect the way therapists and program facilitators approach therapy. Another unknown is who potential employers of the facilitators might be and where funding for these programs might come from. The importance of the musical genre versus the music creating experience is another area for future research. The article by Hickey (2018) indicates that many of the responses from participants focused more on the creative or learning experience rather than the type of music that was used. This indicates that further exploration should be considered in what types of interventions could facilitate the experience of learning and creating music with incarcerated youth.

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## VITA

### EXPERIENCE

#### Graduate Assistant

Sam Houston State University  
August 2020 - Current. Assist faculty with leading classroom activities, grading assignments, and answering questions. I also supervise various practicum groups each semester.

#### Internship

Cunningham Children's Home  
January 2020 - July 2020. Throughout my internship, I led and co-led various music therapy and general music groups, created and implemented a music therapy curriculum, and helped with campus activities while therapy sessions were suspended due to COVID-19 concerns.

#### Teaching Assistant

Sam Houston State University Biology Department  
Practicum in Music Therapy

- Spring 2019- Geriatric
- Fall 2018- Hospice
- Spring 2018- Special Needs
- Fall 2017 - Preschool

#### Music Therapy Student Assistant

Sam Houston State University School of Music  
August 2018 - May 2019 Inventoried and reorganized the resource room and created a bulletin board. Ongoing duties included staffing the resource room so students could check out instruments, cleaning and organizing instruments, and communications with current and prospective Music Therapy students.

### EDUCATION

In progress - Master's in Music Therapy  
Sam Houston State University  
August 2020 - Current

Bachelor's in Music Therapy  
Sam Houston State University  
Minor - Psychology  
August 2016 - August 2020

### ACTIVITIES AND AWARDS

- SWAMTAS board member- Treasurer (1 year)
- Prison Project - 3 weeks of music therapy sessions with teen inmates
- Music Therapy Organization (MTO) (3 years)
- Austin Bible Church: Pianist (2 years); taught Sunday School, Kinder - 1st Grade
- Presidents List - Sam Houston State University (3 Semesters)