

## STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

This document provides guidelines for the practice of music therapy in New Zealand. It outlines the minimum expectations for the competent practice of music therapy, for registration as a music therapist and to maintain an annual practising certificate with the New Zealand Music Therapy Registration Board.

These guidelines should be read in association with the New Zealand Music Therapy Registration Board's Code of Ethics which express the core ethical principles and guidelines for the responsible practice of music therapy in New Zealand.

### Definitions

**NZ Registered Music Therapist:** Registered Music Therapists in Aotearoa New Zealand are registered by the NZ Music Therapy Registration Board, hold a current annual practising certificate, have signed and agreed to meet the Standards of Practice for Registered Music Therapists in New Zealand, and adhere to the Code of Ethics for the Practice of Music Therapy in New Zealand.

**Client:** Throughout this document the term “client” or “client and/or their representative” is used. It is acknowledged that this term has an embedded hierarchy and can be problematic in terms of supporting unequal power-relationships. Some therapists may use and prefer other terms such as “participants”, “players”, “students” or “learners”, or (in medical settings only) “patients”. Until another term is agreed on, the term “client” will be used whilst acknowledging its limitations.

### General Scope of Practice: definition

*Music therapy is a research and/or evidence-based practice and profession in which music is used to actively support people as they strive to improve their health, functioning and wellbeing and is used by a person who is tertiary trained in music therapy or has approved equivalent experience or qualifications, is registered as a music therapist, and holds a valid practising certificate.*

Registered music therapists shall practice within the definition of the scope of practice and their level of expertise and with due regard to these standards and the NZ Music Therapy Registration Board's Code of Ethics. Music therapy practice is not confined to clinical practice and encompasses all roles that a registered music therapist may undertake including client care, supervision, consultation, research, policy-making and education.

### Qualifications

In order to practise within the scope of practice, the person will have an approved masters' level qualification in music therapy from a New Zealand university, or qualifications and experience assessed by the Registration Board as equivalent.

## STANDARDS

There are four parts to the standards:

- A. Practice competencies
- B. Cultural competence
- C. Ethical and Legal practice
- D. Supervision and Continuing Professional Development

A broad range of music therapy approaches is acceptable. However, it is important that the approach used is congruent with the individual's training and experience. The ability to demonstrate understanding of the theoretical framework that underpins the approach is important.

## **A. PRACTICE COMPETENCIES**

### **A1. Musical Skills**

Registered music therapists must:

- A1.1 be able to play at least one musical instrument to a high standard;
- A1.2 have the musicianship skills, and advanced knowledge of music styles and genre, to be able to engage clients in musicking to enhance their health and wellbeing and to achieve music therapy goals, foci or objects as agreed upon by relevant stakeholders;
- A1.3 have an awareness of the cultural context of musical styles and to select appropriate music accordingly;
- A1.4 be able to compose new musical material and adapt existing musical material;
- A1.5 be able to use their voice in a flexible and appropriate way to support and encourage clients (whether or not voice is the therapist's principal instrument).

### **A2. Therapeutic Relationship**

Registered music therapists must:

- A2.1 be able to develop and maintain a safe therapeutic relationship, defined by a therapeutic model that underpins their work;
- A2.2 understand the impact and limitations of the therapeutic relationship both in individual and group settings;
- A2.3 be aware of their own cultural background, including awareness of personal life experiences, values, attitudes and beliefs, and the influence this may have on the therapeutic relationship;
- A2.4 have knowledge of core processes in therapeutic practice such as the therapeutic frame, transference and counter-transference and other concepts from a variety of therapeutic models.

### **A3. Theory (General)**

Registered music therapists must:

- A3.1 understand a range of different models of health, wellbeing, disability and illness and personal development across the lifespan;
- A3.2 acknowledge that biological, social, cultural, psychological, and environmental factors dynamically produce health, wellbeing, disability, and illness, and use this knowledge to inform their practice;
- A3.3 be able to recognise and have critical understanding of methods of distinguishing between human health, sickness and disability (e.g. contextualised knowledge of diagnosis, symptoms and treatment; typical and atypical human development throughout the lifespan);
- A3.4 have knowledge of major therapeutic approaches;
- A3.5 have an understanding of relevant theories of individual and group work.

### **A4. Theory (Music Therapy Specific)**

Registered music therapists must:

- A4.3 have knowledge of the philosophical, psychological, physiological, sociological and/or cultural basis underpinning music as therapy;
- A4.1 understand a variety of music therapy theories, principles, methods and techniques and how they might be applied in various contexts;
- A4.2 know the purpose, intent and function of music therapy for various client-populations;
- A4.4 be aware of and strive to implement and/or incorporate current theory and research, particularly in chosen areas of practice;
- A4.5 understand the needs of music therapy clients and how music can help.

## **A5. Assessment**

Registered music therapists must:

- A5.1 have sufficient understanding of the broad physical, cognitive, social, emotional, cultural and spiritual needs of the population/s with which they are working;
- A5.2 know how to determine, source and apply appropriate music therapy assessment processes;
- A5.3 select and implement a range of music therapy methods for assessing clients' strengths and needs in music contexts, in collaboration with clients if possible;
- A5.4 identify the strengths and needs of an individual and/or groups of clients by analysing and reviewing information gathered through music therapy observation and any other sources of information, such as consultation with relevant other people including collaboration with clients, where appropriate;
- A5.5 be able to identify and mitigate specific risks relevant to their practice.

## **A6. Implementation and Evaluation**

Registered music therapists must:

- A6.1 be able to design, implement, modify and monitor music therapy programmes based upon assessment findings, and in collaboration with clients and appropriate others, in a range of settings;
- A6.2 be able to manage therapeutic boundaries according to context;
- A6.3 be able to monitor the client's progress, with them if possible, and know when and how to implement appropriate closure;
- A6.4 understand, work with, and account for the effects of prescribed and other drugs relevant to context and be able to work with such clients;
- A6.5 adhere to the health and safety legal obligations and guidelines relevant to their work context;
- A6.6 maintain a reflexive approach, i.e., consider implications of learnings on wider context of their work.

## **A7. Communication**

Registered music therapists must:

- A7.1 observe subtle, non-verbal client cues and respond to these appropriately using a range of communication skills;
- A7.2 be prepared to manage complex and sometimes difficult situations in response to client needs;
- A7.3 be competent in written communication and able to keep coherent practice records, and provide articulate and substantive reports, appropriate to context;
- A7.4 be able to articulate and provide a rationale for their professional opinion;
- A7.5 be aware of the importance and value of interdisciplinary communication and know when and how to initiate such communication;
- A7.6 work in partnership and collaboration with clients and their carers and other professionals as appropriate.

## **B. CULTURAL COMPETENCE**

Registered music therapists must:

- B1.1 seek to be informed about the meaning and implications of the Treaty of Waitangi for their practice;
- B1.2 demonstrate understanding of and actively incorporate the principles of protection, participation and partnership in their work with Māori, and other groups;
- B1.3 acknowledge that cultural diversity, and therefore competence, refers to the full range of human experiences and perspectives including, but not limited to, for example, disability cultures, te ao Māori, gender and sexual orientation, and intersectionality;
- B1.4 demonstrate knowledge of and respect for the diverse cultural backgrounds of the populations with which they work;

- B1.5 establish links with relevant cultural providers and communities where appropriate;
- B1.6 treat all persons with dignity and respect.

## **C. ETHICAL AND LEGAL PRACTICE**

Registered music therapists must:

- C1.1 establish and maintain a safe practice environment;
- C1.2 practice good self-care;
- C1.3 gain ethical approval from the appropriate human ethics committees for any research involving clients;
- C1.4 observe all Aotearoa New Zealand legislation relevant to the client and workplace, including but not limited to human rights, the Treaty of Waitangi / Te Tiriti o Waitangi, health and disability, privacy, and health and safety.

## **D. SUPERVISION AND CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Registered music therapists must:

- D1.1 be competent to work independently while being able to consult with and accept guidance from a practice supervisor and other appropriate people, for example allied professionals, carers and other advisers;
- D1.2 engage in reflexive practice and ensure continuing competence in all areas of practice;
- D1.3 be critically aware of their own strength, abilities, attitudes and needs;
- D1.4 be able to articulate professional and personal development plans;
- D1.5 engage in regular supervision where professional issues are shared, explored and worked through by discussion, musicking and/or other creative approaches, thus creating safety for clients and therapist;
- D1.6 regularly review, update, and document knowledge, skills and values through a variety of professional development opportunities.

## **Consultation**

In the preparation of this document consultation has taken place with the University of Melbourne (Australia), the Guildhall School of Music and Drama (London, England), and the World Federation of Music Therapy.

## **Review**

This document will be reviewed by Music Therapy NZ at least every five years.

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