Believe in Your Voice Music Therapy Protocol

Beth Harman, MMT, MT-BC

The following protocol was created for use in a 10-week summer program at the Music Resource Center (MRC) in Cincinnati, OH. It is based off of a similar program developed in Philadelphia, PA (“Hear Our Voices”).

The MRC is a multifaceted teen program that uses recording and performing arts, as well as life skills mentoring to create a sense of empowerment & accomplishment in the urban community. The MRC serves teens in grades 7-12.

We plan to recruit 12 participants. We are over recruiting due to likely attrition, though some incentives will be provided. Participants will range from 15-17.

Session 1:

Introduction:

1. Brief description of the program
	1. Review of the program
	2. Review of expectations and rules
		1. Including what will be permitted in songs (words, themes, ect).
		2. Create ground rules together with the group
2. Group exercises
	1. Introductions for therapist and group members
	2. Interventions to get to know group members (Intervention 1)\*
	3. Interventions to support group cohesion, build trust, and teamwork (Intervention 2)\*
	4. Discuss music preferences
		1. Gauge for potential themes
		2. Gauge for potential styles
	5. Include active music making here, potentially including styles discussed in the previous discussion.
3. Homework and conclusion:
	1. Ask participants to think of musical styles, themes, subject matter or lyrics
	2. Conclude with a final intervention/jam session to end and send off participants.

Session 2:

1. Welcome, goals for the session
2. Interventions to build group cohesion and trust (Interventions 1& 3)\*
3. Begin brainstorming themes, lyrics, and style
	1. Take cues from group to create the order in which to address these topics
	2. Provide examples if need
	3. Reinforce rules/expectations (re: appropriate content and lyrics)
	4. If participants require additional inspiration, consider active music making, free styling, dancing, or story-telling to generate ideas.
4. Write/record all ideas
	1. Validate all ideas and contributions
5. Wrap up

Session 3:

1. Welcome and goals for the sessions
2. Interventions to build group cohesion and trust (Intervention 4 & 5)\*
3. Continue to brainstorm themes, lyrics and styles
	1. During brainstorming, consider free styling, dancing and other creative arts)
4. Select theme and style with group
5. Begin writing lyrics
	1. For brainstorming, consider free-styling, dancing, and other creative arts)
	2. Write/record all ideas
	3. Validate all ideas contributions
6. Wrap up

Session 4:

1. Welcome and goals for the session
2. Interventions to build group cohesion and trust (Intervention 5)\*
3. Continue writing lyrics
	1. Write/record all ideas
	2. Validate all ideas and contributions
4. Wrap up

Session 5:

1. Welcome and goals for the session
2. Interventions to build group cohesion and trust (Interventions 2 & 3 with free styling and other creative arts)
3. Continue with song lyrics
4. Begin with musical components
	1. Engage strengths of participants
	2. Ask who is interested in singing, rapping, playing music, producing ect.
5. Wrap up

Session 6:

1. Welcome and goals for the session
2. Interventions to build group cohesion and trust (Interventions 2/3 add free styling)
3. Finish and finalize song lyrics
4. Continue with musical components
	1. Engage strengths of participants
	2. Ask who is interested in singing, rapping, playing music, producing ect.
5. Wrap up

Session 7:

1. Welcome and goals for the session
2. Interventions to build group cohesion and trust (any intervention)
3. Finish and finalize musical components
4. Begin recording
5. Wrap up

Session 8:

1. Welcome and goals for the session
2. Interventions to build group cohesion and trust (any intervention)
3. Continue recording
4. Wrap up

Session 9:

1. Welcome and goals for the session
2. Interventions to build group cohesion and trust (any intervention)
3. Finish recording
4. Wrap up \*\*

Session 10:

1. Release party with families, MRS staff, and other MRC participants
2. All program participants receive a CD of composed songs

\*Intervention 1: Getting to know you and warm up

1. Get all participants in a circle
2. Introduce activity with expectations (respect each other and each person’s abilities, listen carefully to each person, play only when cued). The “game” allows each person to introduce him/herself and play a short rhythm that the group will echo).
3. Pass out instruments to participants (simple percussion)
4. Allow 2 minutes for free play on instruments.
5. Therapist starts: “My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and I play like this:”
6. The therapist plays a simple rhythm on their instrument
7. The therapist cues the group to echo the rhythm
8. The therapist will then cue the next person in the circle to take their turn and say, “my name is\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and I play like this”, then cue the group to echo.
9. Continue this until all participants have introduced themselves.
10. Repeat if necessary

Intervention 2: Build a beat

1. Get all participants in a circle
2. Introduce activity with expectations (respect each other and where each person is at with their musicianship, listen carefully to each person, play only when cued). The object is to build a hip-hop beat by gradually adding in each participant, who will come in playing a beat, which compliments the other beats being played.
3. Pass out instruments to participants
4. The therapist starts with a “heart beat” beat on the lowest and largest drum.
5. While continuing to play, the therapist brings in each participant one at a time until all the participants are playing together.
6. To change the beat, have all non-drum stop playing (count 4, 3, 2, 1, stop)
7. Bring those participants back in
8. Change dynamics using physical and verbal cues.
9. Repeat if necessary

Intervention 3: Body percussion

1. Follow instructions for intervention 2, but have participants select beat-boxing, body percussion or use non-musical materials to create beat.
2. Encourage creativity

Intervention 4: Rhyme circle

1. Get all participants in a circle
2. The therapist will have a drum, but no other participants will have an instrument
3. The therapist choses a simple word (this word should be carefully selected and not rhyme with any inappropriate words
4. With the rhythm the therapist is playing, the participants will say a word that rhymes with the word the participant before them said.
5. Continue or start process again with a new word

Intervention 5: Song Re-write

1. The therapist will bring a song well known to the participants (for the first time through intervention, therapist will provide the song, participants may suggest/bring songs for subsequent sessions)
2. The therapist will bring templates with key words in the song missing.
3. Each participant will fill in the blanks individually (or in small groups).
4. Participants will present/perform their version of the song to group (not required by all).

Intervention 6:

1. Have participants bring in a favorite (and appropriate) line from a song that inspires them.
	1. Have a songbook with various participant-preferred songs in the event that a participant does not bring a lyric.
2. Write down all lyric lines for all participants to see
3. Find lyric lines that are complimentary until a chorus or verse is created
4. Put verses and choruses together in song form
5. Create a simple beat to be played under song, therapist may provide choral accompaniment if needed.
6. Encourage participants to practice (individually, if needed), and perform song together.
7. Discuss song/process if participants are willing.

\*\*In the even that the song writing process takes less time than allotted, another song can be written and recorded by repeating the necessary steps in the protocol.