

YOUR HEALTHCARE COMMUNITY LINK

Magazines • Web Sites • Custom Publishing • Job Fairs Conferences · Healthcare Shop · Custom Promotions



About Us | Advertise | FAQ | Contact | Work at ADVANCE



Committed to helping therapists enhance their impact on the healthcare industry



CURRENT PRINT ISSUE

Subscriptions are FREE to Qualified Occupational Therapy Practitioners

MAGAZINE

CAREERS

PRODUCT INFO

EDUCATION/EVENTS

JOB FATRS COMMUNITY **HEALTHCARE SHOP**

CUSTOM PROMOTIONS



Vol. 24 •Issue 8 • Page 18 Drumming up Connections

Rhythm makes inroads in child psychiatry

By John Scalici

Drumming and rhythm can be a powerful tool for reducing stress and anxiety, while simultaneously satisfying many of the goals of the occupational therapist during a given session.

In June 2005, I was contacted by VSA Arts of Alabama (a non-profit organization that provides opportunities in the arts for people with chronic illnesses) to facilitate outcome-based rhythm and drumming activities with adolescent and child psychiatric patients at Children's Hospital in Birmingham, AL. I initially met with Michelle Puckett, MS, OTR/L, and Lauren Hansell, MS, OTR/L, to discuss our goals and activities. These goals included:

- · establishing positive peer interactions,
- learning sequencing skills,
- developing social skills,
- learning appropriate self-expression through the drum, and
- attending to task.

Because our groups frequently change, both by size and diagnosis types, we have established a protocol that gives us some consistency in measuring results.

Before each session, we have a briefing on any new dynamics that may be going on within the group. I gather as much information from this short meeting as possible.

To start the session, I introduce an ocean drum, a two-headed, thin instrument with metal beads inside, which when held level will produce the soothing sounds of the ocean. This activity establishes a few key concepts as we pass it from person to person:

- · positive peer interaction;
- sequencing and coordination skills (taking the drum from one person, holding it balanced, experiencing it for an appropriate length of time, then passing it on); and
- using the metaphor of balance (when our emotions and feelings are in balance, then our lives come into balance). With the help of our OT team, we reinforce the idea of healthy expression of emotion to achieve balance. For some, attaining this balance means taking medication or continuing counseling

Next, small percussion instruments are laid out inside the circle. Patients choose from instruments such as shakers, rattles, finger cymbals, bells and wooden frogs. As this is done, there is some chaos—another teachable moment! This is a good time to introduce some visual/verbal cues to help us control our "new voices" as well as practicing turn taking and appropriate peer interactions.

As we proceed with the activity, I explain that we will create a rhythm or sound with our new voices one at a time, as I make eye contact with the first person to my right or left. As I play a simple rhythm on my drum, I look

Search our archives for print and web articles.



Our Patients' Quality of Life is Our Measure of Success

Career opportunities at www.carilionclinic.com









Setting the New Standard for Neurorecovery.

> Instructed by Julia Harper MS, OTR/L

to the person next to me, inviting him or her to play along with me. Because I am the one creating the steady beat, there is no need for the others to maintain a steady rhythm. The activity becomes about building eye contact and social skills and learning how to function as a group.

When that person has played for a brief moment, he or she makes eye contact with the next person, signaling that it is that person's turn to play. This continues around the circle. Next, I ask them to play "together," creating a bit of "controlled chaos."

I use body language to signal them to play quietly (which I can do because I have spent time establishing trust and building rapport with the group). The activity ends with me asking the group to collectively fade out their sounds. With this simple activity, we have achieved several goals:

- · non-verbal communication skills (making eye contact),
- auditory sequencing,
- · creativity as an individual and as a group, and
- · accountability and responsibility.

Using Hand Drums

First, we learn how to create "rumbles"—fast drum rolls. We speak about the chaos again and how we can be in control in times of such chaos. Each person is given the opportunity to start the group on a "rumble" and then control the volume by using hand gestures for "up," "down," and "stop."

I utilize hand drums for the following activities:

Rhythm Question/Answer

Each participant is encouraged to respond to a "rhythm question" that is played on the drum by the leader. With the help of the OT team, participants are encouraged to respond by including one or two sounds they heard in the question, i.e. scratch, tap, rub or knock, then add their own rhythm.

Expressive Drumming

I ask the participants if it is possible to use these new sounds to express a certain emotion or feeling. We begin by giving examples of emotions like fear, anger, disappointment, frustration, depression or confusion. I ask each participant to identify one feeling or emotion he is feeling or has felt in the past and express that feeling on the drum, utilizing whatever sounds he wants.

Group Rhythm

This activity helps to develop problem-solving skills and social interaction.

The process begins with the facilitator (me) playing a simple pulse on my drum, inviting each person to add something to my rhythm that she feels will complement, but not overpower the rhythm.

In some sessions, it may take several tries to maintain a successful group rhythm. Many times, if the rhythm falls apart, we discuss the importance of listening to each other, or leaving some space in our rhythm for the next person to create her rhythm. These concepts are very important to developing proper social skills.

Session Analyzation

After the session, a brief questionnaire is handed out. This data is currently being collected to analyze the effectiveness of the program.

Some questions are: Did you like drumming today? Do you feel better, worse or no different after drumming? Do you feel drumming helped you to express feelings without using words?

The occupational therapist is looking for change in affect for the patients, change in self-confidence and self-esteem, any sensory-related issues (tactile or auditory), as well as rhythm and sequencing difficulties.

Drumming is an activity that allows one to experience group success while being an individual. Because of the physical nature of drumming and rhythm activities, our program serves to reduce stress and anxiety and allow patients to express themselves in alternative ways. It has proved valuable for developing social skills among participants while allowing the OT to make vital connections with clients.

John Scalici, founder of Get Rhythm Programs, is an internationally recognized drum circle facilitator, speaker, musician, clinician and master teaching artist. Through his affiliation with VSA Arts of Alabama, he has initiated rhythm-based programs at the Alabama School for the Deaf and Blind, Children's Health Services, and many others. He can be reached at iohnscalici@mac.com.







Free e-Newsletter

Sign up to receive our FREE e-Newsletter. You'll receive exclusive information, special offers and career information just for ADVANCE for Occupational Therapy Practitioners. For a sample, check out our <u>latest</u> newsletter.

Name	
Е	
Zip	Go >
	00 -



PUBLICATIONS Nurses | LPNs | Enterprise Imaging & Therapeutic Radiology Management | Imaging and Radiation Therapy Professionals | Directors in

Rehabilitation | Physical Therapists & PT Assistants | Occupational Therapy Practitioners | Speech-Language Pathologists & Audiologists | Audiologists | Long-Term Care Management | Managers of Respiratory Care | Respiratory Care Practitioners |

dministrators of the Laboratory | Medical Laboratory Professionals | Health Information Executives | Health Information Professionals |

SERVICES ADVANCE Healthcare Shop | ADVANCE Healthcare Shop Live | ADVANCE Custom Promotions | Healthcare Careers | Job Fairs |

Online CE | ADVANCE Custom Publishing

CORPORATE About Us | Contact Us | Advertise | Work for ADVANCE | Subscribe | Privacy Policy | Terms of Service

© 2008 Merion Publications | 2900 Horizon Drive, King of Prussia, PA 19406 | 800-355-5627 | Publishers of ADVANCE Newsmagazines