MUSIC : THE UNIVERSAL HEALER

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how music is inherently therapeutic and healing without it being performed through the likeness of the evidence-based clinical intervention of music therapy . In this paper, I aim to shed light on an alternative form of music therapy I define as community-based music therapy. This aforementioned form can help mitigate trauma and improve mental health, and it does not follow the standardized criteria of traditional music therapy.

BACKGROUND

Music and Physiology

Neuroimaging studies have demonstrated that music initiates the section of our brain in which it is responsible for processing emotions (Ahtisaari & Karanam, 2017). This part of the brain is known as the limbic system . The limbic system is composed of the limbic cortex, hippocampal formations, the amygdala, the septal area, and the hypothalamus (Rajmohan & Mohandas, 2007).

Music Therapy:

Definition: An evidence and art-based health profession which uses music experiences within a therapeutic relationship to address clients' physical, emotional, cognitive, and social needs" (Stegemann, 2019).

Taught By: Health care professionals and music therapists.

Limitations: Standardized music therapy is offered in medical settings or expensive music programs that cater to a demographic that is primarily from a high- socioeconomic background. Additionally, standardized music therapy is only taught by professionals who undergo costly training. Furthermore, there is a lack of ethnic and racial diversity among music therapists. The criteria and socioeconomic barriers to regulate and practice music therapy limit its population outreach, application, and practice. The current application and understanding of music therapy disregard an alternative form that is also has therapeutic effects, which in this paper is defined as community-based music therapy.

COMMUNITY-BASED THERAPY

Community-based music therapy can be performed and regulated by anyone and does not require certifications, finances, or any pre-requisites. Community-based music therapy can be created or consumed to gain its therapeutic and healing effects. I will be discussing the aforementioned form from both an individualistic and collective perspective . This research will focus on three specific modes of community-based therapy : rap, singing, and poetry. Additionally, this paper will highlight two musical artists from Southern California to serve as examples of community-based music therapy.

MUSIC MADE BY THE INDIVIDUAL FOR THE INDIVIDUAL

Kendrick Lamar

When discussing his critically acclaimed album To Pimp A Butterfly he said the following :

"Making this album was therapy, not only for you, but for me" ~ K. L (2015)

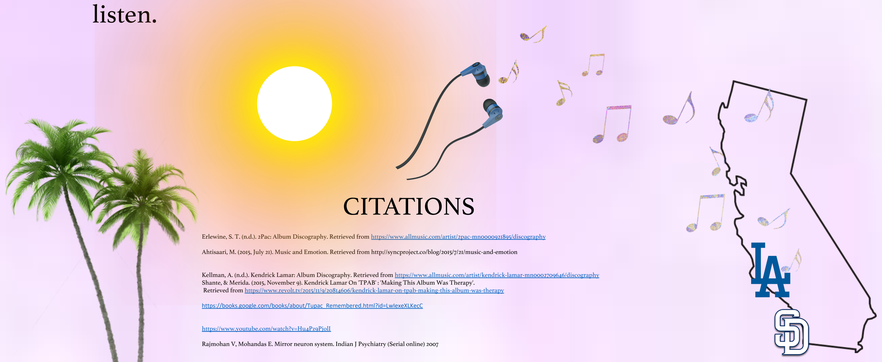
"My release therapy is writing the music" ~ K.L (2015)

Tupac Shakur :

"Pac had a lot of pain in those records. It was his therapy. And his lyrics were also medicine for his listeners" ~ Tupac Remembered

MUSIC MADE BY THE INDIVIDUAL FOR THE COMMUNITY

Kendrick Lamar and Tupac Shakur tackle an array of societal issues throughout their music, specifically ones deeply rooted in race, mental health, and historical injustices. Their artwork is a form of activism promoting social change and black empowerment. Furthermore, their music acts as therapy for their listeners. Creating a space where listeners feel understood and their pain and traumas expressed and acknowledged to a world that otherwise wouldn't listen.



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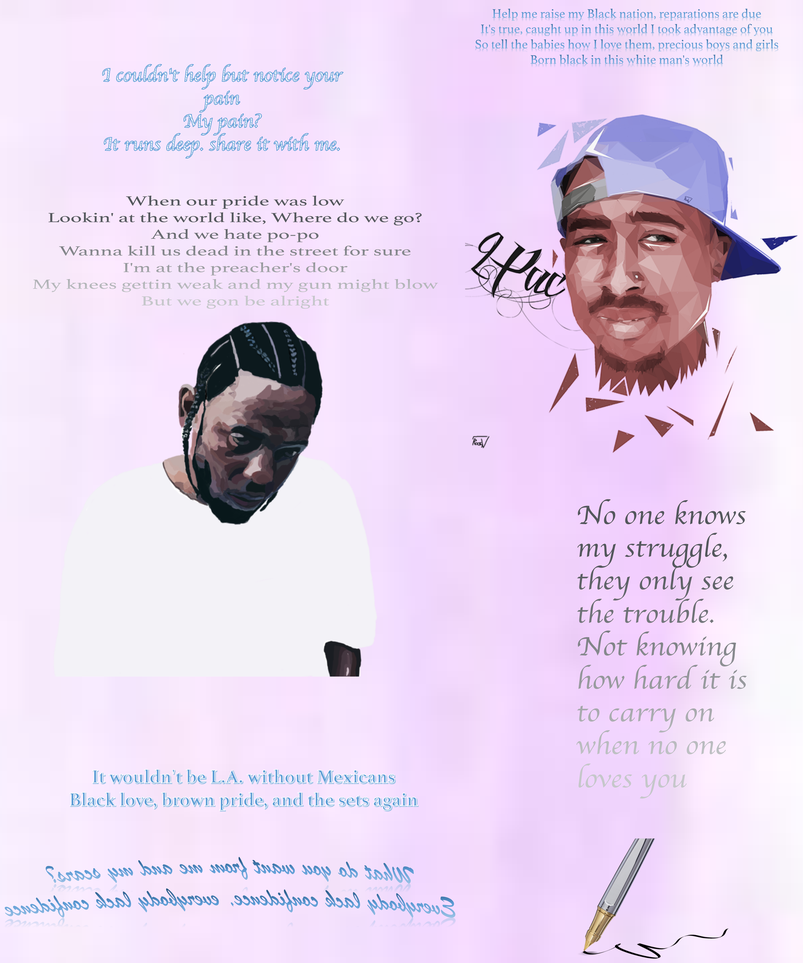

I've been dealing with depression ever since an adolescent

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

I am advocating for the support, creation, and funding of music programs in primarily underrepresented communities in Southern California. Additionally, already established music-based community programs should be encouraged and sponsored. The goal is to provide adolescence with the opportunity to either start or continue their own community-based music therapy. These programs will not only promote healing and improved well being but also acknowledge the creativity and talent of the youth.

In conclusion, I have illustrated how music has therapeutic effects beyond simply those gained through standardized evidence-based music therapy. Global Health practice should incorporate the promotion of both music education and community-based music projects in marginalized and underrepresented communities.