Making meaning, creating connection: A classification to define and describe arts activities for people with dementia

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Room 217
Music Care Webinar Series
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A note about me
Aims of the presentation

Provide an overview of the arts and dementia

Share findings from my PhD research

Present a proposed classification and common language for the arts and dementia

For consideration and discussion:

*In what ways is this general framework for the arts and dementia applicable to the particular qualities and components of music care?*
Introduction to the arts and dementia

What is dementia?

Living well with dementia:

Quality of life

Psychological wellbeing

Cost effective

Right to access the arts
Challenges in arts and dementia research and practice

No consensus on what arts activities should include (component parts)

Little theoretical understanding of what makes them ‘work’

Multi-disciplinary professionals speak different languages

Arts activities are highly variable and complex

Must improve: description, explanation, communication, simplification
Strategy No. 1 for arts and dementia research: Scientific

Approach the arts scientifically: measure it like a clinical intervention

Examples: RCT, physiological responses, observational scales

Measuring physiological responses to the arts in people with a dementia

George E.C. Thomas\textsuperscript{a,d}, Sebastian J. Crutch\textsuperscript{b,d}, Paul M. Camic\textsuperscript{c,d,s}, Submitted on behalf of the Created Out of Mind team, Wellcome Collection, London

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Measuring the quality of life and well-being of people with dementia: A review of observational measures

Katherine Algar, Robert T Woods and Gill Windle
Dementia Services Development Centre (DSDC), Bangor University, Wales, UK
Strategy No. 2 for arts and dementia research: Subjective

Develop measures for psychosocial interventions: campaign for their parity of esteem

Examples: Human flourishing, Visual matrix method

Dancing with stones: critical creativity as methodology for human flourishing
Angie Titchen and Brendan McCormack

\[School\ of\ Nursing,\ Fontys\ University\ of\ Applied\ Sciences,\ Eindhoven,\ The\ Netherlands;\ \]
\[Institute\ of\ Nursing\ Research/School\ of\ Nursing,\ University\ of\ Ulster,\ Newtownabbey,\ UK\]
But the fact remains: to justify investment, all interventions must prove their value

“In order for arts to be included in commissioning of health and social care services, there needs to be robust evidence of their effectiveness, impacts and costs”  
(Daykin and Joss, 2016)

Arts for health and wellbeing  
An evaluation framework
Aims of the research

Identify and describe the component parts of an arts activity

Suggest and explain how the arts ‘work’ and produce their effects

Improve multi-disciplinary communication

Map and simplify the complex field of the arts and dementia
Research questions

A classification of arts activities for people with dementia

In what ways can arts activities for people with dementia be defined and described?

How might it be possible to classify and theorise the arts and dementia?

How achievable is a common language for the multi-disciplinary field of the arts and dementia?
Taxonomy (classification) as a solution

Attempts to name, describe, define and explain the world around us

Used in healthcare, education practice and music for health

Provides a common language for unique experiences

Taxonomy bridges the arts and sciences

Observing → naming → knowing
You could also think of a taxonomy as:

- A map
- A blueprint
- A menu
- A recipe
- A list of ingredients

Which crucially all allow interpretation and choice
Research approaches guiding the project

Realist research:
Flexible
Real world stakeholders
Complex contexts
Context + Mechanism = Outcome
Mechanisms are hidden – help to explain how something ‘works’
Example classifications from music and health

Bev Foster, Sarah Pearson, Aimee Berends (Canada)
*10 Domains of Music Care: A Framework for Delivering Music in Canadian Healthcare Settings*

Margareta Wärja, Lars Ole Bonde (Denmark)
*Music as Co-Therapist: Towards a Taxonomy of Music in Therapeutic Music and Imagery Work*
Who could benefit from a taxonomy (classification)?

Artists and practitioners reflect on artistic practice

Funders and commissioners identify outcomes and impact

Carers and care staff share knowledge for activities

People with dementia social prescribing/arts on prescription

Researchers support evaluation and analysis
Developing a taxonomy (classification)

Realist systematic approaches → Literature review → Focus groups and workshops → Music Therapy case study → Delphi questionnaire study

People with dementia → Carers and care staff → Artists and practitioners → Therapists and arts managers → Researchers and academics
A simplified version of the principles

Possibility
The arts can give people new experiences

Transformation
The arts can transform people and change how they feel

Involvement
The arts can include and welcome people

Selfhood
The arts can create a sense of identity

Engagement
The arts can be lively and fun

Humanity
The arts can be supportive and relaxing

Connection
The arts can enable social interaction

Expression
The arts can help people share and process their emotions
Music and dementia care

Case study findings:

Music therapy is not a clearly defined category

Multiple art forms can be used

Particular approaches can be effective for people with dementia
Challenges of creating a common language

Subjectivity
e.g. transcendence or transformation

Different professions
e.g. activity or intervention

Synonyms
e.g. process or mechanism

Upkeep of taxonomy
e.g. mastery, agency and resilience
Caveats, disclaimers, limitations...

The taxonomy is one interpretation of the field

Foundational: needs more testing, welcomes improvement

Aims to balance generalisability with personalisation

Does not seek to be rigid or dictate arts practice

Person-centredness is key
Next steps and future research

Dissemination materials

Keeping the taxonomy updated

Further testing and development

Consider Version 3 based on feedback from research and practice

Consider the physiological effects of arts activities
Thank you for listening

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