

THEIR ENTRY INTO THE SOCIETY - MUSIC & DANCE A PATHWAY
Application of Music and Dance as Therapies at Lebenshilfe
(A pragmatic Study since three decades from developing countries point of view)

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Introduction:

Music and Dance therapies are being used at lebenshilfe as an alternative medicine while rehabilitating the mentally handicapped people from children to adults. Music is the Divine art which impacts the human mind where as Dance is an expressive form of art which involves various body movements giving a head to toe experience to both players and the viewers.



Instrumental Play using Hands and fingers parts



Classical Dance: Expressions using the body parts



Soulful music emerges into God. It provides a sense of joy to the listeners.

Music and Rhythm

When people with intellectual disabilities sing or play instruments, it may not sound like music to many ears but yet they steal the show every time by tuning to the hearts of listeners. They catch the attention of



people by splendid performances.

Using music and dance as a therapy to mold these people for overall development producing stunning results. The therapists of Music and dance are well brace up to train them to work for body-mind connectivity. Mentally challenged people too, get some thoughts but they can neither realize nor retain. However music provides them a sense of joy, activates their damaged brains and ultimately touches their souls which help them finally emerging into God.



Lebenshilfe works basing on this belief and hence introduction of music both vocal as well as instrumental as a therapy for training these people for a life with reasonable quality and human dignity.

Clear thinking on choice of music is important. Active music helps people having mild type of retardation and

passive music suits people with aggression. Wrong choice leads to disturbance physically and mentally, causing severe behavior disorders.

Planning is essential. Basic thinking of what kind of music, how to organize and which type helps which child, and how much time for application is required etc. are to be well planned. Otherwise outcome will not be constructive.

Each child requires separate tune and rhythm for tuning their minds towards positive development.

Music therapy plays an awesome role and producing positive results when applied on mentally challenged people of all ages with different kinds irrespective of the level of retardation (from severe to mild). Many fail to make an expression how they enjoy but most of them give expressions by gestures. The therapist is to be smart to find out if the applied sound or song is suitable for that particular student. Similarly Dance is an effective tool and helps the retarded to channelize the extra energy. and to drive away the accumulated negative feelings connected with behavior disorders as well as sex-related problems.



Indian Classical Music has healing effects. This was mentioned even in the 'VEDAS', which Indians consider as an authoritative statement.

"Indian Ragas produce invaluable sound waves. Listening to these sound waves work wonders and has the power to impact the whole human body if they are properly tuned and listened to without

disturbing original rhythmic sound waves. Many Saints and Musicologists experimented on this subject and proved that how the sound waves bring an impact on neurological system. The Human Body is but an Inner Universe which responds to physical and neural communication. Music, delivered in a calibrated dosage evokes a neural response". Dr T.V.Sairam, Renowned Indian Author of Several Books, including *Medicinal Music, Raga Therapy, What is Music and Home Remedies*

Dance as a therapy:

Most of the mentally retarded having aberrant behaviour problems have no self control. Some have limited awareness whereas many aware of their self. To my experience, they are good in acquiring self- help and other required skills. They pay a lot of interest in dancing and give movements in a rhythmic way for any kind of music or movie songs no matter with no or less communication skills. Once they are trained to associate and adjust their movements, including the irregular gestures, with a tuning to the instrumental play, sure behavior disorders come under control.



Dance therapist teaching the kids initial steps

The WHO defines Health as 'a state of physical, mental and social well-being'.

Tiger Dance was developed basing on this belief to deal with the physical body, vital movements, mental thoughts, intellectual convictions and emotional feelings.

Tiger Dance Therapy:

Tiger Dance Therapy is a new conceptual and therapeutic innovation developed to drive the mentally retarded with aberrant and other behavior disorders towards overall development. Tiger Dance found to be an effective therapy to help children gain emotional control and as an outlet for accumulated aggression, tension, stress and other such feelings besides physical and mental health promotion leading to overall development. As a significant therapy activity, it creates relationship between the mentally retarded and the society through tiger dance presentations on various festive occasions promoting social recognition.



Stealing the show: Stepping in the streets using legs, feet and hands.

Through sensorial experiences mentally retarded experience the world around them.

As tiger dancers they receive appreciation, acceptance and social recognition from the viewers that encircle them while dancing besides income generation.

During this dance their feet and hands (palms) touch the ground (sensorial experience through touch) and ears are tuned to the drum beat (sensorial experience hearing), eyes are pointed to the colorful attire (sensorial experience through eyes) and as a result the minute nerves located in the finger tips, ear drums, eyes connected to the brain receives enough pressure to activate the brain. This works on nervous system providing massage to finger tips and four Paws. It helps for concentration promotion also.

Benefits are multifarious shown as follows:.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECT

- 1. Promotes concentration**
- 2. Increases power of attention**
- 3. Develops observational skills**
- 4. Strengthens expression skills**
- 5. Develops reasoning.**

PHYSIOLOGICAL ASPECT

- 1. Provides body concept.**
- 2. Develops fine and gross motor activity, leading to best loco motor function.**
- 3. Promotes excellent body balance.**
- 4. Strengthens both upper and lower limbs. Even the minute muscles and nerves are strengthened by certain postures like picking up currency note with the eye lids and lips.**

2. SOCIAL ASPECT:

- 1. Promotes sociability as a group activity.**
- 2. Increases a sense of unity.**
- 3. Promotes a sense of urge for friendship.**
- 4. Gains societies appreciation and recognition.**

3. HEALTH-PROMOTIONAL ASPECT:

Regulates all most all the systems of the body.

- 1. Digestive system**
- 2. Respiratory system.**
- 3. Excretory System.**
- 4. Circulatory System .**

Who says what about this therapy?

Heikki Sappato

Researcher FAMR Research unit, Finland

Finland

July, 1996

Dear Mrs Saraswathi Devi,

I found your presentation on "Tiger Dance Therapy" very stimulating and thought provoking. I do believe that you've reached some essential thoughts concerning the treatment of people with developmental disabilities: the harmony of basic physical processes (Respiration, Digestion), Learning to feel and control ones body, learning to control ones movements etc. I Don't think that mental Harmony can be founded without treating the physiological and somatic disharmony which we so often see in persons with developmental disabilities.

In this context, your experiments on "Tiger Dance Therapy" gave me a lot to think about

Paper Clippings 23 July 1999: Deccan Chronocle : to quote a few sentences about tiger dance.

Tiger Dance is one of the folk dances of Andhra Pradesh. Also known as puli vesham, this dance has proved to be an excellent therapy for improving the mental and physical health of special children.

The New Indian Express; 15 July 1999

Tiger Dance is the new panacea for the mentally retarded children. At Lebenshilfe, a service organization, which takes care of these unfortunate souls, the therapy is working wonders. Drumbeat to tiger dance attracts the children. As their attention is riveted to the dancers, it becomes easy for the organization to make them listen and respond to their suggestions for leading a comfortable life despite the handicap.

Women's Era (South Edition)

Tiger Dance Tuning the Mind: by N. Mallikeswaran Drum beats, The feet, limbs, hands, shoulders and head move to the beat. Masked in yellow with beautiful black stripes. The tiger dance, a traditional folk-dance form, performed during village festivals in the streets of Andhra Pradesh is found to be effective therapy in rehabilitating the mentally handicapped. The irregular movements of the mentally handicapped can be converted into meaningful gestures, says T. Saraswathi Devi, who has been experimenting with this therapy for the past several years.

Anita Norrdahl

Psychologist

Finland

17, Sept 1996

Dear Mrs T.Saraswathi Devi,

I heard your wonderful speech concerning Tiger Dance Therapy at the IASSID Congress in Helsinki in July 1996. In my opinion your speech was the very best among all speeches. Now I would ask you if you are willing to send me a copy of your speech -including the fantastic drawings and - If possible - a photo of someone doing Tiger Dance Therapy.

I look forward to getting your letter.

Yours Sincerely

SD. Anita Norrdahl

Dance therapist uses all the facets of music and musical instruments aiming at expression of physical, emotional, mental, social, aesthetic, and spiritual feelings to help the mentally challenged to improve or maintain their health. Therapist observes the level of cognitive functioning, motor skills, emotional and affective development, behavior and social skills during the initial stages to assess the suitability of the therapy on the recipients

Dance Therapy and its impact: Sigadam Srinivas: A living Legend

34 year old Sigadam is an emotionally disturbed person. His mother's fatal death left him to his brother who pays no interest in his welfare. Poverty coupled with the aggressive behavior of Sigadam compelled his brother to neck him out of home. He has communication difficulties also. His mood often goes off when his demands are not met. He lacks emotional balance. He threatens teachers at school that he commits suicide if his demands are not met. The total negligence of his brother completely disturbed his behavior. He always searches for someone who loves him. He makes good drawings. He developed some sewing and carpentry skills. He is unable to develop social contacts. Relations do not allow him to visit their homes. His living became a big challenge. He has difficulty to meet his basic needs. His needs for love and affection were also grown up with his growing age. He is fond of being with a family.

What Sigadam's sibling says?: We are greatly frustrated with his behavior. We are not prepared to receive any more insults from neighbors or relations. He lacks emotional balance causing unbearable nuisance. Our relationship was gone with the death of our mother who died with cancer. We believe that, he is responsible for all the troubles in our family. We are afraid of his behavior threatening either to kill himself or to throw things with force against us. He is self injurious.

Factors affecting functional abilities: Missing love, lacking affection, having no friends, unable to form social networks, peer groups rejection, relations' refusal, siblings arrogance, resulting beating others without sufficient cause, committing mistakes intentionally such as spoiling the dresses while stitching, tearing the drawing sheets while drawing, spilling the colors while painting etc. running out of school premises, wandering in the streets, lacking interest in self, non-participation in cultural and sports activities, etc.

Application of Dance and music therapy by Mahalakshmi who has depth of understanding of this boy helped Sigadam develop psychologically to attain emotional balance. Lord Hanuman, his favorite God from 'Ramayana-Mythology' and his role-play as Hanuman in classical dance ballet helped him to attain emotional balance. Lord Hanuman who is an embodiment of emotion attracted him. His role as demon Mahishasura also brought a lot of impact on his nature while correcting his behaviour.



Sigadam Srinivas in SIVOHAM' group dance (first boy in orange dress)
Choreographed by Cultural Director Mahalakshmi

As a group activity this group dance SIVOHAM promotes unity and helps reducing fear complexity. Children experience to move in a group. They learn to accept other children, their feelings, attitudes through group contacts. Now he turned into a responsible person.

"Through the steps using legs and feet and karanas using hands and fingers.the physical body is brought into a graceful relationship to the cultural-environment-learning how to move, to talk, to sit, carry oneself with grace and dignity. Through the Bhavas(inner feelings) the emotions are engaged and channeled."

'A Yoga of Indian Classical Dance: The Yogini's Mirror'. Written by Dr Roxanne Kamayani Gupta, PhD, USA.



DIMSA is a tribal dance performed by tribal people during the village and other festive occasions. Through this dance all the participants move in a circle inter locking the hands showing their backs to the audience, Besides fun this dance promotes unity and help developing social contacts.

Dimsa practice at Lebenshilfe

Didgeridoo (didge)



This therapy was introduced by Konrad Schwienhorst, Würzburg, Germany at Lebenshilfe

The didgeridoo(didge) is an effective acoustic instrument to produce deep sound vibrations. This is the ancient overtone instrument of the Australian aboriginals is basically a hollowed stick, but didges can be made as well from different materials like plastics, metal plates pipes bamboo, clay or other hollow materials. With the circular breathing techniques, the

player can hold the ground tone without pauses, by pushing out air of the mouth and breathing through the nose at the same time.

In this therapy the didge can be used in active and passive music therapy at physiological and psychological levels

Benefits of Active playing: (Pushing Air through the mouth)

1. Snoring and sleeping apnea can be controlled. 2. The deep stomach breathing will be trained (benefits for wheelchair-bound or lying in bed) 3. Relief for asthma patients. It helps mentally handicapped people to open up themselves and experience their own voice. Different feelings can be released and transformed into sound (screaming singing, laughing, etc)

Passive playing (receiving the vibrations):



Tiger Dance, is not only a therapy, it is an art. It is not only an art, but a symbolic spiritual activity that engages the senses, focuses the energies, and involves the whole person, body, mind, and emotions. Tiger Dance develops lung capacity, enhances circulation and oxygen and prana (energy) flow.

How this therapy helps?

Sensory Cognitive Development:

The relationship between the body and mind of the retarded, remains as a conundrum. Their thoughts can not be converted into meaningful actions as quickly as it is done in the case of normal people. This therapy helps the mentally retarded to imitate the tiger hunt jumps with application of mind. Tiger hunt jumps closer to yoga postures help for physical emotional expression whereas drum-beat helps for conveying the thoughts adding to sensory cognitive development

Outlet for accumulated aggression and anger

Tiger dance is a cerebral creative art. It is good to promote expression skills.

Imitating the definitive movements of the tiger, acts as an outlet for accumulated aggression, anger and tension of the retarded person thereby releasing their pent up feelings. The tiger cubs or the baby tigers are attached to the mother tigers till they learn the technique of hunting. During this period, tiger cubs learn expression of love, happiness and joy from the mother tiger through the acts of licking, rubbing, patting etc. Tiger Dance therapy helps children to learn expression of love, joy and happiness while imitating the movements of the baby tigers.

Introduction of theatre, application of music and dance as therapies and instrumental play of music, worked out wonders at Lebenshilfe. Dance as These therapies helped them to form an idea of the kind of abilities they carry and possibilities for their entry into the society.. Methods framed and strategwell as music help people with intellectual disabilities worked out to overcome social skill deficits, behavior disorders and failure to accommodate themselves in socially acceptable situations are found helpful to achieve a place in the contemporary society with economic independence with limited or semi skills.

Methodology:

1. Group listening of music in closed rooms.
2. Encouraging children to listen to various sounds from animals and other sounds heard from the environment(air, trees, water etc) by taking them out on field trips.
3. Asking them to imitate the sounds they observed in the classroom sessions.
4. Training to observe and slowly to touch the musical instruments.
5. Drawing and painting the musical instruments.& the body parts.
6. Observational sessions: Observing the body parts and imitating the body movements.

7. Ask them to imitate the animal movements
 8. Movements basing on the space-relationships
- Discussion : over the impact of the therapies.

1. Face- to- face interviews .
2. Open discussion sessions with parents and therapists
3. Closed Cross-Talks (involving Parents and grand-parents).
4. Cultural Presentations, honouring the traditions and customs

Right thoughts can show the parents a right path leading to a sense of total relaxation. Moral courage filled in their minds drives them to understand the situation and confidence helps them to choose right activities which wash out the anxiety, stress, and disappointment. Parents agree that they should observe the psychological insights, strengths and weaknesses, inconsistencies etc while making expectations. They should allow their retarded children to grow at their own pace not under pressure.

Conclusion:

Entry of mentally challenged people into the society is possible by using music and dance as a pathway. It helps mentally challenged people to cross the barriers and achieve social recognition, acceptance and appreciation. Besides providing a sense of joy to the listeners and viewers, these two therapies promote ability to form the concept, inner motivation and readiness to respond to the external stimulation. Leading them into the society with a sense of confidence that 'I CAN DO' and a kind of feeling that 'I AM NO LESSER THAN ANYBODY' music and dance open doors for simple invitational performances which help them feel that they are dignified as respected human beings. The little remuneration offered by audience in appreciation during the performance promotes income generation. Dance and music skills obtained bring acceptance and social recognition fulfilling the ultimate goal of streamlining them into the society. Dance promotes social-emotional development and ability to get along with the group and increases the ability for visual attention, perception and memory whereas music leads to acquire skills in the area of hearing attention, perception and memory. Physical growth lays foundation for all the other areas of development. Dance helps to strengthen both large and small muscles and they become more stronger and better coordinated through continued practice during the therapy sessions. . The main objective of Sound and Rhythm therapy is to take out the children from isolation and engage them in musical setting so as to make them grow, develop and expand their mind with the beauty and charm in music.

Music helps to acquire listening skills. Passive music suits people with aggression. Wrong choice leads to disturbance physically and mentally, causing severe behavior disorders. The therapist is to be smart to find out if the applied sound or song is suitable for that particular student. The rhythmic patterns of the drums automatically help to regulate the breathing while concentration on the dance helps relieve anxiety and direct mental energies in a positive direction. . Music and dance facilitate creative expression in people who have no confidence to express themselves.

Therapeutic application of dance and music has enormous power to produce awesome outcomes. Both are Sensory -Centered and Sound-based, helping the retarded to receive sensorial experiences. The irregular body movements of the mentally challenged will be translated into meaningful gestures through dance therapy. It involves the body, mind and emotions for activating the sensory receptors.