

Therapeutic Music Experience
Big Kids Scare the Heck Outta Me
Mary Jane Landaker, MME, MT-BC

Purpose: Address issues surrounding fear; discuss strategies for handling fear; social interaction; increasing emotional awareness

Source: Written by J. Lithgow. © 1999 Watershed Songs (ASCAP). All Rights Reserved. Found on CD *Singing In the Bathtub*, Track 12. TME/Intervention © 2010 by Mary Jane Landaker, MME, MT-BC

Materials: Guitar; (OPTIONAL) word cards; lyric sheets; markers to fill-in-the-blanks; CD; stereo; electricity source

Environment: Variable seating; must have established appropriate therapeutic relationship between client and therapist

Song/Chant/Words: *Singing In the Bathtub*, Track 12.

Procedure: R = Reinforcement opportunities; C = Redirection/Cue opportunities; A = Assessment

1. Start singing original song, emphasizing the fear statements as well as the solution statements
2. C= ask clients to identify what the singer is scared of
3. R= reinforce appropriate responses. C= redirect inappropriate responses by singing the chorus of the song again until client is able to identify the thing that scares the singer
4. Change song, replacing original words with specific things that scare the therapist
5. C= ask clients to identify therapist's fear statement. R= reinforce appropriate responses. C= redirect inappropriate responses by singing the chorus of the song again until client is able to identify the thing that scares the therapist
6. A= can the client determine what causes fear?
7. Ask client to assist therapist in forming strategy to help with the situation and fear
8. R= reinforce appropriate responses. C= redirect inappropriate responses by singing the chorus of the song again until client is able to assist in developing a strategy
9. Sing the new version of the song including the revised chorus as well as the revised verse offering solution
10. Repeat steps 4-9 using client suggestions/fears

Therapeutic Function of Music: In this case, the song is the vehicle for addressing the emotion associated with specific situations. As emotional awareness is a difficult skill for persons with developmental and concurrent psychiatric issues, the music allows clients to express their emotion through the lyrics as well as through the music itself. Presenting the issue of fear in an upbeat song allows for expression of the situations where clients feel fear without the associated physiological responses to the situation. The format of the music encourages the client to engage in cognitive exercises addressing the emotion of fear and allows the client to develop a solution. With repetition of the song, the client may develop a

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conditioned response to the music and be able to engage in the solution to the emotional trigger.

Original song on recording: *Singing in the Bathtub* by John Lithgow

Melody	Pitch	Rhythm	Dynamics	Harmony
Scalar and repetitive		2/2	Variable	Major

Form	Tempo	Timbre	Style	Lyrics
AB	Approx. 160	Variable	Folk	Original - comical

Chart adapted from Hanson-Abromeit, D. (2010). *A Closer Look at the Therapeutic Function of Music*. Presentation at 2010 American Music Therapy Association National Conference: Cleveland, OH.

Adaptations:

- Brainstorm list of things that cause fear in group of clients. Use to complete the song chorus and verses
- Use lyric word cards or lyric sheets to encourage clients to complete song lyrics without sharing with the group

Extensions:

- Rehearse song and solution with clients to encourage the response
- Make social story song/powerpoint/book for specific client to target specific fear and targeted response