

*The role of musical improvisation in shaping bonding formations in clients with borderline personality disorder*

Dr. Katrien Foubert, Prof. Dr. Jos De Backer

Abstract:

Research shows that disturbances in interpersonal functioning, and in particular heightened interpersonal sensitivity and bonding, are one of the key issues in borderline personality disorder. In this presentation, we demonstrate how music therapy might be used as a therapeutic approach to address interpersonal hypersensitivity in BPD patients. In music therapy using a musical improvisation approach, the therapist and patient improvise music together. Musical improvisation in music therapy facilitates a context in which we may experience ourselves dynamically from moment-to-moment in relation to the other. This happens spontaneously, without the restriction of a script or a score. The use of musical improvisation provides an artistic scene to situate the way in which patients relate to others, making the therapeutic approach of habitual interaction patterns less threatening and more accessible for clients diagnosed with BPD. The improvisational setting can be seen as a sort of laboratory in which these spontaneous relational patterns are placed within a fictional context and become the object of all kinds of musical interactional 'experiments'. This will be illustrated with clinical vignettes and video illustrations.