

Notable AX
Kings County Record
May 2, 2017

Dominique Piquard, a certified music therapist practicing in Sussex and Moncton, has kindly agreed to be a guest writer for this edition of Notable AX. Dominique is a member of both the Canadian and Atlantic Associations of Music Therapists, and she facilitates local music therapy drumming and song-writing groups through the Sussex Activity Centre and Canadian Mental Health. Thanks, Dominique!

As a certified music therapist, one thing I notice a lot these days is how many people are not comfortable with their voice. I was also very uncomfortable with my voice at first and I don't think it's uncommon. I studied voice and thought that the more I mastered my voice the more I would know about it and the more comfortable I would become using it. However, even after all the training, it is still sometimes a very personal tool that can be a vulnerable and powerful experience to share. I understand the hesitation some of my clients have with their voice, and music making. Making music and singing still seems to be presented as a talent that only some may use.

In music therapy, I find ways to use my voice and my instruments to help build therapeutic relationships with my clients. The young "non-verbal" ones (that I'd rather call pre-linguistic) can be very verbal and expressive when given the space and time to sing and verbalize in music therapy sessions. Building a musical structure and song around their verbalizations can be a beautiful way to offer opportunities to build confidence in their self-expression and communication skills even when language is not yet easy for them.

The structure of the music can demonstrate the back and forth of a conversation in a way that meets my clients where they are. My goals with clients are not that they all become musicians; my goals are to: help them achieve the coordination and team skills from making music together; help them recognize rhythmic patterns; to identify different timbres and instruments; to build fine and gross motor skills through instrumental play and singing; to aid in self-expression by co-creating music; or in other words, to help my clients achieve their goals of well-being "within [their] cognitive, communicative, emotional, musical, physical, social, and spiritual domains" – (CAMT 2016, www.musictherapy.ca)

I enjoy bringing my voice and instruments to music therapy sessions. I use humour and laughter with the intention to help my clients become less intimidated to explore music. Sound is the first thing that greets us as we enter this world, and last experience when we leave this world. My hope is that we can use music in all the in-between stages of life to help reach our personal goals of wellness, while enjoying the process as much as possible.