**Abstract**

This presentation introduces a case study that aims to show how music can be used to improve the quality of life for individuals diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). There is extensive research on music interventions for individuals with ASD but there is a lack on research within Indigenous context. This presentation focuses on one of five cases, a teen called Debbie, from a research project on the meaning of music for First Nations children in British Columbia, Canada, diagnosed with ASD.

**Research design**

During the research process, a paradigmatic shift from ethnography within a Western academic tradition to an Indiginist research paradigm was made. Indiginist methods such as dreams, feelings, intuition, were used in addition to common Western research methods such as conversations, observations, filmed observations and notes. The terminology used is intended to reflect the reciprocal relationships between the researcher and the people involved. Therefore research partner is used instead of participant. And conversation is used instead of interview. Colonial terms such as Indian and Aboriginal have been replaced by First Nations and Indigenous unless they are in the formal name or legislation. The person first approach is used when referring to individuals with autism.

**Ethical considerations**

This research project was approved by the ethical committee at the University of Eastern Finland. Informed consent was given by all who participated in the study and consent was negotiated throughout the research process. All names were changed and tribal affiliation omitted.

**Analysis**

In 2013, I had conversations with Debbie, her mother, resource room teacher, music therapist, after school aide and Aboriginal support worker. These recorded interviews were transcribed and the content summarized in mindmaps. In 2014, these mindmaps were used in follow-up conversations. Observations in school and a video recorded interaction in which Debbie showed me her favorite song videos and listened to her favorite radio station on a computer at the after school club. Notes were taken as well. The conversations were transcribed, the notes written on the computer and the video recording was transcribed for dialogue and actions. The program ELAN was used in order to view frame by frame and analyze selected sections. All the material was compared for content.

**Results and conclusions**

Debbie uses music in all aspects of her life to feel happy and safe. She listens to it, watches videos, sings and dances whenever possible. At home, in school and at the after school club, music is a big part of her structure. Contemporary pop and dance music has been her preference until she recently made and played an Aboriginal drum. Indigenous music has not been used in interventions or support for Debbie. There is a scarcity of research on music and autism within Indigenous context. Hopefully, this case can inspire future research and influence support systems and interventions.


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