

Book Reviews

Therapeutic Song-Writing: Development in theory, methods and practice

Felicity A Baker

Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, £24.99
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The latest book from music therapist Felicity Baker builds upon Baker and Wigram's work *Songwriting* some ten years earlier. The work takes us on an international journey through this rapidly developing area of therapeutic practice. The book is diverse in terms of clinical and cultural practices, and I believe something that clinicians within most frameworks and backgrounds could benefit from.

Therapeutic Song-writing is divided into four sections. Part one provides a succinct introduction, useful for those who have yet to engage with song-writing. Part two examines factors effecting song-writing, from the role of music (conveying meaning, building identity, etc), group factors (size, cohesion, etc), individual factors (emotional wellbeing, personality, etc) to the physical space. Part three takes the reader through an extensive journey of methods to approach the practice. This section is succinct, readable, and eminently practical, enabling any therapist to consider how they might approach using song-writing, and the potential challenges and outcomes - regardless of their musical experience or skill level. It includes literature reviews for each method, and a handy diagram of each

process. Part four is possibly the most complex and thought-provoking part of the work, where Baker breaks down major practice frameworks and explores song-writing's place within each.

The approach Baker has taken to song-writing showcases its great potential within therapeutic work and helps us see its applicability to a range of fields, whilst also moving music therapy towards a more professional, measured interventionist perspective. The text will certainly become a definitive guide to the topic, and I would recommend it as an accessible, appealing read to music therapists, students, and those engaged in arts and health research

Kate Gee

