

# Code of Ethics

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# Code of Ethics

## Preamble

The Australian Music Therapy Association Incorporated was founded in 1975 to establish and maintain professional standards in music therapy training, education, research and practice. The Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct (hereafter called The Code) cover the following seven areas:

- General Principles - the dignity and rights of the person
- Ethical responsibilities to the Client in responsible practice
- Ethical responsibility in research
- Ethical responsibility in education and training
- Ethical responsibilities to colleagues and wider community
- Ethical responsibilities in social media
- Ethical responsibilities for professional and personal development.

This revised Code of Ethics replaces all previous Codes (1991; 1994, 2001, 2008, 2014).

Registered Music Therapists are aware of and comply with the National Law. The Code is not a substitute for the Law, as in force in each state and territory, other relevant legislation and case Law. If there is any conflict between the Code and the Law, the Law takes precedence.

## Structure of the Code

The seven principle areas of professional practice are outlined, providing statements which serve as standards of acceptable practice and Section 8 addresses infringements of the Code. An associated document is the Grievance Procedure, for the hearing of complaints.

## Definitions

### The Association

Means the Australian Music Therapy Association, Incorporated, hereafter referred to as AMTA.

**President**

Means President of AMTA Inc.

**Ethics Committee**

Means committee of that name formed under 13b) of the Constitution of the AMTA Inc.

**Associate Member**

Means a member of AMTA who supports the general principles of the AMTA Inc., and who is not a Registered Music Therapist, nor in training as a Music Therapist.

**Registered Music Therapist (RMT)**

Means a person who has successfully completed a course of study and clinical practice in music therapy, whose qualifications and experience have been approved by the National Registration Committee of AMTA Inc., and whose Registration is current.

**Music Therapy Student (MTS)**

Means a person who is in the process of completing an AMTA-accredited course of study including clinical practice in music therapy.

**Supervision**

Means a professional relationship conducted through meetings between a Registered Music Therapist and an appropriately qualified and experienced supervisor for the purposes of management of clinical and professional issues arising for the RMT in the course of their professional work.

**Client**

Means anyone (individual, group, family, organisation or community) who is served professionally by the RMT or MTS.

## Client Electronic Communication

The electronic covers any form of digital communication including but not exclusive to email, text messages, skype, internet, e-health

## Social Media

Social media refers to interaction that occurs among people in which information is created, shared and exchanged in online communities and networking sites. Social media includes but is not limited to sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, blogs, content sharing sites such as YouTube, Instagram, MySpace, and online discussion forums.

## Testimonial

The Australian Health Practitioner Regulatory Agency's Guidelines for Advertising Regulated Health Services (May 2014) (AHPRA Guideline) state that 'testimonial' has its ordinary meaning of a positive statement about a person or thing. In the health service context, it includes a positive statement about the clinical aspects and outcome of a health service and a positive statement about a client's experience with a practitioner or a health service. Further information about testimonials is provided as a fact sheet on the AMTA website.

## Purpose

Music therapy is a self-regulating profession governed in Australia by the Australian Music Therapy Association. The purpose of this Code is to establish minimum standards of ethical practice by the RMT, and for the information and protection of those using their services.

## Code of Ethics Review Procedures

The Code of Ethics is reviewed every three years by the AMTA Ethics Committee. In the review, committee members update the language and scope of the Code in response to emerging professional issues. Ad hoc amendments to the Code can be made outside of an official review round in response to an emerging ethics issue if deemed necessary by the Chair of Ethics or the AMTA board. All changes to the Code are proposed by the ethics committee to the AMTA board, who give final approval of amendments. Amendments are communicated to the membership in a timely manner via the AMTA Bulletin.

## 1. General Principles.

- 1.1 All members of the Australian Music Therapy Association are governed by the Code and have an obligation to know and abide by it. A lack of awareness or understanding of any clause in the Code is not considered a defence in relation to a charge of alleged infringement. The Code is not exhaustive, and therefore conduct that is not specifically addressed by the Code may not necessarily be ethical.
- 1.2 Members of AMTA have respect for all people without discrimination on the basis of colour, culture, nationality, gender, sexual preference, religion, politics or social status. Members will have inclusive respect for the cultural and societal norms of all people.
- 1.3 Members of AMTA do not exploit people on the grounds of age, level of mental or physical competency, or economic status.
- 1.4 Members of AMTA uphold the values of equity and justice at all levels of professional service.
- 1.5 A member of the AMTA who is not a Registered Music Therapist:
  - 1.5.1 does not falsely represent himself/herself as such,
  - 1.5.2 does not utilise any other term which implies qualification or accreditation;
  - 1.5.3 does not use any acronym relating to membership of the Association as a means of suggesting qualification,
  - 1.5.4 does not advertise his/her work as if professionally accredited.
- 1.6 Members distinguish personal from professional views when acting on behalf of AMTA and shall represent AMTA only with appropriate authorisation.
- 1.7 Members refrain from the mis-use of an official position within AMTA.

- 1.8 Members respect the aims, objectives and philosophy of AMTA and carry these out with integrity, and in ways that promote confidence in AMTA and its services.
- 1.9 Members of AMTA abide by the laws of the society in which they live.
- 1.10 RMTs understand and act in accordance with the laws of the jurisdictions in which they practise and, where applicable, the organisational rules and frameworks that relate to the services they provide.

## **2. Ethical Responsibilities to the Client.**

Registered Music Therapists do not offer professional music therapy services to members of their immediate family, or to friends.

- 2.1 Registered Music Therapists respect the essential humanity, worth and dignity of all people and promote this value in their work.
- 2.2 Registered Music Therapists recognise and respect diversity among people, treating them equally and fairly.
- 2.3 Registered Music Therapists use every available resource to best serve Clients.
- 2.4 Registered Music Therapists recognise vulnerability in Clients and respect their rights.
- 2.5 Registered Music Therapists take all reasonable steps to avoid harm to their Clients as a result of music therapy practice or related professional activity.
- 2.6 Registered Music Therapists faced with situations that extend the boundary of their competence, seek Supervision and consider referral to other professionals.

- 2.7 Registered Music Therapists do not use any technique or intervention unless trained in its use or are in training and under supervision.
- 2.8 Registered Music Therapists refrain from imposing their personal opinions and values on Clients.
- 2.9 Registered Music Therapists are responsible for setting and maintaining professional boundaries within and beyond the music therapy relationship.
- 2.10 Registered Music Therapists are aware that the deeper the involvement with the Client/s emotional life during music therapy the less likely is the possibility of a subsequent equal relationship following termination of therapy. Registered Music Therapists therefore seek professional Supervision should any attempt be considered to build a relationship with a former Client.
- 2.11 Registered Music Therapists do not exploit Clients past or present in financial, sexual, emotional or any other way.
- 2.12 Registered Music Therapists do not accept or offer payments for referrals or engage in any financial transactions with Clients apart from negotiating the ordinary fee charged for music therapy.
- 2.13 Registered Music Therapists do not engage in sexual relations with Clients. This not only relates to sexual intercourse, but includes any form of physical contact that has as its purpose some form of sexual gratification or which may be reasonably mis-construed as having that purpose, whether initiated by the Client or RMT.
- 2.14 Registered Music Therapists and Student Music Therapists working with children familiarise themselves with and meet the requirements of the prevailing legislation in their state/territory that relates to criminal checks for people working with children. They also report concerns about suspected child abuse through the voluntary and mandatory reporting processes that are relevant in each state. Many organisations also have their own policies and frameworks for child protection and RMTs should familiarise themselves with these. RMTs working in private practice should either check the legislative requirements

and/or consult the peak Child Protection agency in their state/territory.

### **Ethics in relation to documentation, confidentiality and informed consent**

- 2.15 Registered Music Therapists treat with confidence any information about Clients, whether obtained directly or indirectly. This applies to all verbal, written, reported or computer stored material pertaining to the therapeutic context. All records, whether in written or any other form, need to be protected with strict confidentiality, abiding by the relevant state and federal Privacy Act/s.
- 2.16 Exceptional circumstances may arise that give the Registered Music Therapist good grounds for believing that the Client will cause serious physical harm to others or themselves, or believe that the Client is at risk of abuse. In such circumstances where the breaking of confidentiality is required, this is undertaken preferably with the Client's permission, or after advising the Client that the course of action will be followed, or after consultation with a professional Supervisor.
- 2.17 Confidentiality is waived when a Registered Music Therapist is subpoenaed by the judicial system.
- 2.18 Any breaking of confidentiality should be minimised both by restricting the information conveyed to that which is pertinent to the immediate situation, and by limiting access to it by only those persons who can provide the help required by the Client.
- 2.19 Agreements about confidentiality continue after the Client's death, unless there are over-riding legal considerations.
- 2.20 RMTs disguise case material for teaching, publication, conference presentations and/or research, and for use on the internet, in an appropriate and adequate manner, removing identifiable details of the client/s involved.

- 2.21 RMTs have a responsibility to acknowledge the rights of clients to refuse services and to be aware of relevant informed consent procedures as they relate to their area of practice
- 2.22 RMTs obtain informed consent to present images and where possible, de-identify images for public use. Clients/guardians have the right to choose which method is employed. Attempts should be made to avoid a full face profile except when it is agreed to indicate responses directly related to the goals of the therapy program. If images are for use on the internet, clients/guardians are made aware of the accessibility and longevity of information stored in cyberspace and ability for third parties to take images/information for their own use. RMTs consult their facility's policy for presenting images in public. For RMTs working in private practice, the AMTA guidelines on presenting images at AMTA National Conferences should be followed when presenting images in public.
- 2.23 Registered Music Therapists consult their facility's policy on the recording of therapy sessions. Where recording is permissible, they obtain written informed consent from Clients before the audio recording or video recording of music therapy sessions. In instances where written consent is not appropriate, other measures taken to obtain informed consent must be sufficiently documented to ensure accountability. The purpose and use of the recording, the duration of storage and means of disposal must be adequately explained to the Client prior to their giving informed consent. In the case of diminished or impaired capacity that precludes such understanding, consent shall be obtained wherever possible from a legal guardian or a Statutory agent. In the case of a minor, consent shall be obtained from a legal guardian but also from the child if they are of sufficient maturity to understand. Clients/legal guardians have the right to withdraw consent to the audio recording or video recording at any time.
- 2.24 Registered Music Therapists generate and keep adequate records (notes, transcripts, manuscripts, songs, art works, audio/visual recordings, e-mail correspondence, short message service (SMS) texts, and social media communications) for a minimum of 7 years unless legal requirements specify otherwise. Records must be kept in a secure location and accessible only to those who have a legitimate need for the information. RMTs ensure appropriate disposal of outdated Client files and devise adequate plans for records in the event of incapacity, death or withdrawal from practice.
- 2.25 Registered Music Therapists shall terminate treatment in cases where it is reasonably clear that the patient/Client will not benefit from further intervention. The RMT informs the Clients of the decision and where appropriate, facilitates arrangements for continuing their care and the handover of relevant clinical information.

### 3. Ethical Responsibilities in Research.

- 3.1 Registered Music Therapists who intend to carry out research familiarise themselves with the most current National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research involving Humans, published by the Commonwealth of Australia, in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council (NH&MRC).
- 3.2 All research in music therapy must be conducted by a researcher with suitable experience, qualifications and competence in the use of any method or technique being used in the research. Registered Music Therapists ensure that there is adequate Supervision of their research and that ethics approval has been granted from a NH&MRC Registered Ethics Committee.
- 3.3 Before commencing a research project a Registered Music Therapist obtains approval from an appropriate Ethics Board within the facility in which they work. A submission to that Ethics Committee must include full information on:
- a) the hypothesis or research question,
  - b) a rationale for the selection of appropriate participants,
  - c) an appropriate method of recruitment,
  - d) a concise summary of the project in “everyday” or “plain language” including the aims and benefits of the project
  - e) the method to be adopted, including a clear description of the intervention and observation to be conducted. The interventions being studied should be at least as effective as standard music therapy practice,
  - f) the possible risks to the physical, mental and/or emotional health of the subjects involved
  - g) procedures to be adopted should Clients be adversely affected during the research,
  - h) provision for the storage of data in a secure location, accessible only to the researcher/s.
  - i) provision that all data will be erased after the required period of time, in accordance with NH&MRC Guidelines,
  - j) a copy of the information sheet and consent form to be distributed to Client’s/research participants, with translation into the Client’s/research participants preferred language or communication method if necessary.
- 3.4 Participation of Clients in research shall be voluntary and based on written informed consent. Signed consent forms agreeing to participation in research must be obtained from:

- a) the Client whenever he or she has sufficient competence to make this decision;
  - b) the parents or guardian, or
  - c) any organisation or person in accordance with the law.
- 3.5 Registered Music Therapists respect a Client's decision to refuse to participate in a research project. Clients are allowed to withdraw from a research project at any time. The researcher must give an assurance to the Client that refusal to participate in, or a decision to withdraw from the research, will not result in any discrimination, reduction in the level of care, or any other penalty.
- 3.6 Where potential research participants are individuals such as students, employees or junior colleagues, Registered Music Therapists do not use a position of authority to exert undue pressure on the person to participate in the research.
- 3.7 Where research participation is a course requirement, Registered Music Therapists ensure that the student is given a viable alternative to participation in the research project. Students must be assured that they have a right to decline involvement, and a right to withdraw from the research, without any discrimination or other penalty.
- 3.8 All Clients shall be informed of the nature of the research before being asked to sign a consent form, including information on:
- a) the nature of the research,
  - b) the name, address and phone number of the researcher for further information,
  - c) length of time the project will take,
  - d) length of time required for participation in the research,
  - e) any possible risks,
  - f) confidentiality and storage of data,
  - e) publication of results,
  - f) whether there are any risks in being deprived of treatment in order to constitute a control group,

- g) contact information for research supervisors
  - h) contact information for the Board of Ethics in the event that a participant wishes to report a query/concern/complaint.
- 3.9 The circumstances in which the research is conducted must provide for the physical, emotional and psychological safety of the Client/s.
- 3.10 When publishing and presenting research results Registered Music Therapists present findings in a manner that does not distort or mis-lead.
- 3.11 When publishing and presenting research results Registered Music Therapists give credit to all who have contributed in proportion to their contribution, acknowledging unpublished as well as published material that has directly influenced the current research and subsequent publication.

#### **4. Ethical Responsibilities in Education and Training.**

- 4.1 Registered Music Therapists who are responsible for the education and training of music therapy students ensure that the programs are competently designed and delivered, and that the institution that provides the training program is made aware of their responsibility to meet and uphold the accreditation requirements of AMTA.
- 4.2 Registered Music Therapists make every effort to ensure that published information concerning any educational program in which they have a teaching or organisational role, is accurate and not misleading, especially with respect to expectations of, and possible benefits to, students.
- 4.3 Registered Music Therapists in their teaching, present information that is current, accurate and objective. Where they present their personal opinion or professional judgment, these statements must be prefaced appropriately.
- 4.4 Registered Music Therapists recognise the power they hold over students or supervisees and avoid engaging in conduct that is personally demeaning or coercive to students or supervisees.

- 4.5 Registered Music Therapists are aware of the potential difficulties and challenges of dual relationships with students and supervisees and avoid such dual relationships to the best of their abilities, seeking appropriate Supervision when such situations are unavoidable.
- 4.6 Registered Music Therapists do not require or otherwise coerce a student to participate in a classroom, or other training demonstration if the student is distressed.
- 4.7 Registered Music Therapists instruct students (MTS, work experience and allied health) and volunteers witnessing therapy sessions that they are required to preserve the confidentiality of the Client (as outlined in Clause 2.15) and in every way to safeguard the Client's privacy.
- 4.8 Registered Music Therapists in supervising the work of students have a responsibility to model and promote awareness of, and adherence to, the provisions of this Code, particularly regarding confidentiality.
- 4.9 It is unethical for Registered Music Therapists who are providing Supervision or training, to require or coerce supervisees or trainees to disclose personal information either directly or in the context of any training procedure. An exception exists where a training institution, bound by Duty of Care to the community, requires an applicant to disclose an existing medical condition on application to the course. With consent of the student, a course director may relay information about a student's medical condition to a supervising RMT.
- 4.10 In providing Supervision to music therapy students a Registered Music Therapist does not enter into a therapeutic role with the student. If the supervisor considers that a student needs therapy, the supervisor should consult with the student and/or the education Institution, and the student may then be referred to a professional therapist, other than the assigned supervisor.
- 4.11 In providing Supervision to professional music therapists, a Registered Music Therapist does not enter into a therapeutic role with the supervisee.

- 4.12 While due weight is given to a supervisor's assessment of a student and his/her acquisition of adequate skills, no individual supervisor has the right to determine the success or failure of a student in the course of his/her training.
- 4.13 Registered Music Therapists maintain confidentiality regarding the standard of work and personality of each student, and their opinions are not expressed to another RMT without proper consent. Music Therapy Students should similarly respect the standards of work and personality of the Supervisor, maintaining confidentiality of information discussed with a supervisor.

## **5. Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues and Wider Community.**

- 5.1 Registered Music Therapists consult with colleagues/supervisor and with the Ethics Committee of AMTA when faced with an apparent conflict between current legislation and an ethical principle.
- 5.2 Registered Music Therapists advertise their services in a professional manner, restricting the advertisement to factual information concerning the services offered; qualifications of the practitioner and contact details.
- 5.3 Registered Music Therapists do not advertise or promote themselves as 'specialists' unless they have received the appropriate qualifications to be able to use the term.
- 5.4 Any information provided to the general public on music therapy and/or its potential benefits should be presented in a well-balanced way that is not misleading, uses plain language and if using references, accurately cites the source.
- 5.5 Registered Music Therapists do not knowingly permit their names or any other publicity to appear in unseemly coverage by the media.
- 5.6 Registered Music Therapists shall not sell, supply, endorse or promote services or goods in ways which exploit their professional relationships with clients.

- 5.7 Registered Music Therapists do not use testimonials from Clients for use in advertising, or any other form of promoting professional services. It is the Registered Music Therapists responsibility to take any necessary steps to remove unsolicited testimonials.
- 5.8 Registered Music Therapists take reasonable steps to ensure that they do not knowingly offer professional services to a Client receiving music therapy from another Registered Music Therapist except by agreement with that therapist or after termination of the Client's relationship with that therapist.
- 5.9 Following a Locum Tenens appointment a Registered Music Therapist only enters into a professional relationship with a Client treated in the course of that appointment where there has been consultation with, and agreement from, the original therapist. In consultation, both RMTs should be aware of the length and depth of the therapeutic relationship developed with the locum tenens therapist, and the needs of the Client.
- 5.10 Registered Music Therapists do not actively solicit nor initiate work with Clients who are already in another form of therapy without consultation with the Client's present therapist.
- 5.11 Registered Music Therapists do not use verbal, written or electronic forms of communication to damage or undermine the professional reputation or practice of RMTs, students, or other allied professionals.
- 5.12 Registered Music Therapists are committed to working effectively within the treatment/special education team, informing and consulting with team members and family members where appropriate.

## **6. Ethical Responsibilities in Social Media**

- 6.1 Registered Music Therapists ensure that their use of social media and e-health is consistent with the Code of Ethics of AMTA
- 6.2 Members are aware of and do not breach professional, confidentiality and privacy obligations as outlined by the AMTA Code of Ethics and where applicable, members workplaces, when using social media

- 6.3 Registered music therapists are responsible for content on their social media account/s even if the content is not initiated by them
- 6.4 Registered music therapists with professional social media accounts are responsible for regularly reviewing the content on their page/s to make sure all material is compliant with the Code of Ethics.
- 6.5 Registered music therapists with professional social media accounts are advised to set out a clear policy that is visible on the site, outlining the type of content that can be posted to the site, and the actions that may be taken should the policy not be adhered to.
- 6.6 Social media sites under the auspices of AMTA will have an appointed mediator/s that will regularly monitor the site and remove any content which is not in alignment with the Code of Ethics.
- 6.7 Registered music therapists may only upload to social media sites musical artefacts created during therapy (for example client videos, songs recordings, lyrics etc.) if written consent is obtained from the client and any other person involved in the creation of the artifact.

## **7. Ethical Responsibilities for Professional and Personal Development.**

Responsible practice involves a commitment to self-awareness, personal and professional development and self-care.

- 7.1 Registered Music Therapists are required to satisfy a program of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in order to maintain registration with AMTA. Registered Music Therapists complete 20 points of activity over a period of 12 months. This annual activity includes a series of mandatory online tutorials which include education regarding terms of practice stated in the Code of Ethics, and mandatory acknowledgement that they have read the AMTA Code of Ethics. Further information can be found in the current CPD Handbook. The Committee for Continuing Professional Development is responsible for implementing the CPD program and liaises with RMTs regarding the submission of CPD logs online every 12 months. Failure to complete the CPD process indicates an infringement of the code of ethics and will result in registration with the AMTA being rescinded. There is opportunity to appeal the decision to rescind registration and, in this instance, the Association's By-Laws for Grievance Procedures will be followed.

- 7.2 Registered Music Therapists have a responsibility to themselves and to their Clients, to maintain their professional effectiveness and resilience. They monitor their own professional effectiveness and seek help, or refrain from practice, when personal resources are sufficiently depleted.
- 7.3 Registered Music Therapists do not practice when personal or emotional difficulties, illness, alcohol, drugs or any other cause significantly impairs their effectiveness.
- 7.4 Registered Music Therapists endeavor to make suitable referral when they cannot offer service for any reason.
- 7.5 Registered Music Therapists are encouraged to have regular Supervision and use such Supervision to develop music therapy skills, monitor performance, and provide accountability for practice.

## **8. Infringements of the Code of Ethics and/or the Standards of Practice.**

- 8.1 Lack of awareness or misunderstanding of any provision in the Code of Ethics or the Standards of Practice is not considered a defence to any charge brought in relation to an alleged infringement of such provisions.
- 8.2 Any person who becomes aware of any alleged infringement of the Association's Code of Ethics or the Association's Standards of Practice, can either bring the alleged infringement to the notice of the person involved for resolution, documented in writing, or contact the Chair of Ethics for advice. Where appropriate, the Chair may write to the person on behalf of the complainant.
- 8.3 In the instance that a member directly contacts another member in regards to an alleged infringement, a minimum of 2 weeks will be given to respond. Where there is no resolution, , that member shall notify the Chair of the Ethics Committee in writing, giving a full explanation of the alleged infringement, including the name of any individuals alleged to have been adversely affected by the person's conduct, and documenting any procedure already taken to attempt to resolve the matter.

- 8.4 The Chair may dismiss the complaint about an alleged infringement where in the Chair's judgement, the matter:
- a) does not fall under the purview of the Code of Ethics, or Standards of Practice,
  - b) is not sufficiently substantiated,
  - c) is not of sufficient consequence to warrant a Formal Grievance Procedure (as described in the Association's By-Laws for Grievance Procedures), or
  - d) has been resolved by facilitation with the parties
- 8.5 Where the Chair has not dismissed the complaint, he/she shall arrange a meeting by notice in writing to the parties concerned. The purpose of the meeting will be to negotiate a satisfactory resolution of the matter. If the matter is not resolved, or if all parties fail to attend, the Chair shall initiate the Formal Grievance Procedure.
- 8.6 Complaints lodged more than 12 months after the date of an alleged infringement will not normally be considered.

### **Provision to Rescind Membership Registration**

- 8.7 A Grievance Committee (as defined in the Association's By-Laws for Grievance Procedures) may recommend to the Board that Registration/Membership of an individual be rescinded if an infringement of the Code of Ethics or Standards of Practice of the Association has occurred or is occurring.
- 8.8 The recommendation to rescind Registration/Membership must be considered by the Board which may approve such a recommendation under Section 18 of the Constitution of the Association.

- 8.9 In the case of Registration being rescinded, the person may not practice Music Therapy, nor represent themselves as a Registered Music Therapist, or any other term that implies qualification.
- 8.10 An application for re-Registration can be made to the Registration Committee after a period of 12 months. The Committee will determine recommendations for further courses of study, supervision, supervised work or personal therapy work.
- 8.11 The Registration Committee may require examination of the candidate and documentation to ascertain that the required study/supervision/supervised work or personal therapy work has been completed satisfactorily. Completion of this work does not in itself guarantee or imply that the person will be re-Registered. The National Registration Committee assesses the application and recommends approval or otherwise to the Board.

## Notes

### **Locum Tenens appointment.**

AMTA defines a “locum tenens” appointment as one in which a Locum practitioner “holds the place” of the Owner of a music therapy practice, (or a music therapy position), for an agreed length of time, and carries out the duties of the practice or the position. The Locum practitioner is an employee of either the Owner of the music therapy practice, (in the case of a private practitioner), or of the employer of the music therapist for whom the locum is undertaken (as in the case of a salaried position). The Locum practitioner is paid a Salary or negotiated rate (as in the case of a private practitioner). The Owner of the music therapy practice, or the employer, is responsible for covering associated costs such as taxes and insurances. Either the Owner or the Locum provide the equipment and facilities with which the locum practitioner carries out the duties of the practice.

### **Note on Consent.**

National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research involving Humans, published by the Commonwealth of Australia (2007), in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council (NH&MRC), makes special mention of features to be considered when research is conducted with very vulnerable patients.

These notes are (in part):

### **Neonatal intensive care research.**

Research involving infants receiving neonatal intensive care, must be in accordance with the infant's best interests. The very small size and vulnerability to harm of some infants is a unique feature of this research which renders all but minimal intrusion likely to be contrary to the infant's best interests.

### **Terminal Care Research.**

Research in terminal care is distinguished by the short remaining life expectancy of participants and their potential vulnerability to unrealistic expectations of benefits. Researchers must take care that the prospect of benefit from research participation is neither exaggerated nor used to justify a higher risk than that involved in the patient's current treatment. Researchers must respect the needs and wishes of participants to spend time as they chose, particularly with family members.

### **Unconscious Persons.**

The distinguishing feature of research with unconscious persons is that due to their incapacity for cognition or communication, it is impossible for them to be informed about the research or to determine their wishes about it. Consent for participation in research by an unconscious person must be given by others, including relevant statutory authorities, on that person's behalf. Because of their extreme vulnerability, such persons should be excluded from all but the most minimally invasive observational research.

## **Acknowledgements**

In revising the Code of Ethics, the following documents were consulted, and some material has been reproduced with permission:

- American Music Therapy Association
- Canadian Music Therapy Association
- Australian Association of Social Workers
- National Health and Medical Research Council (NH&MRC),
- NSW Institute of Psychotherapy
- Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists
- Interrelate

## Standards of Practice

A **Registered Music Therapist** (RMT) is a person who has successfully completed a course of study and clinical practice in music therapy approved by the National Registration Board of **Australian Music Therapy Association Incorporated** (AMTA Inc.), and whose Registration is current.

In conducting music therapy programs, Registered Music Therapists are bound by professional procedures. The sequence and relative importance of each of these procedures may be adapted according to the needs of the Client/s; the facility; the philosophical orientation of the RMT, and other influences. The professional procedures undertaken by RMTs are:

- Accepting referrals
- Assessment
- Planning
- Implementation
- Documentation
- Evaluation
- Termination

### 1. Referral.

RMTs receive referrals from:

- a) other RMTs
- b) members of the medical or paramedical team
- c) special education team
- d) parents, guardians or primary carers
- e) Clients (self-referrals)
- f) community service agencies

### 2. Assessment.

RMTs use a range of assessment procedures in order to determine the strengths and special needs of their Client/s. Ethnicity and cultural background are taken into account in all aspects of the assessment. The following broad areas may be included in the assessment:

- physical
- social/emotional
- psychological

- cognitive and communicative
- educational
- spiritual
- creative

- 2.1 Assessment methods may include: medical and social history; observation; interview; verbal and non-verbal interactions, and the use of assessment tools appropriate to the Client's needs.
- 2.2 RMTs document the assessment outcomes and use these to determine the aims and objectives for music therapy programs. Such documentation is placed in the Client/s file (or student's file in the special education setting).
- 2.3 Through assessment procedures, the RMT determines whether the Client's needs can be met through music therapy or not. In cases where music therapy is thought not to be the appropriate method of treatment, the RMT may refer the Client to another health/special education practitioner.
- 2.4 RMTs may engage in joint assessment procedures with other health/special education practitioners.

### **3. Planning.**

- 3.1 Based on the outcomes of assessment, the RMT designs a planned music therapy program for the individual Client or group. In some cases, the music therapy program may be planned in conjunction with other programs: e.g. Individualised Education Programs or other health/special education practitioners
- 3.2 The music therapy program is expressed as goals/aims; objectives; purposes or intentions. These may vary according to the philosophy of the facility, the needs of the Client/s and the philosophical orientation of the RMT.
- 3.3 In some situations, the aims may unfold as the program progresses, and may be influenced by the changing needs of the Client, and the evolving nature of the therapy. They may also relate to exploring the most effective means of communicating or interacting with Client/s, and may involve a trial of differing music therapy methods and approaches.

- 3.4 In some situations, aims are difficult to formulate because the RMT may be meeting the Client for the first and only time. In approaching the Client to provide a one-off music therapy session, the RMT may be guided by intentions for the interaction and through information gathered by members of the treating team, referrers, and /or family members.

#### **4. Implementation.**

- 4.1 RMTs deliver a music therapy program in accordance with the aims, objectives, purposes and intentions that have been determined.
- 4.2 RMTs use music therapy methods in which they have been adequately trained and provides music therapy at their best abilities as a musician.
- 4.3 RMTs use appropriate musical instruments of highest possible quality and the best possible sound system, in order to facilitate quality music experiences.
- 4.4 RMTs create and maintain a safe auditory environment.
- 4.5 RMTs abide by the rules of the facility with respect to health, safety and infection control.
- 4.6 RMTs abide by the professional rules of confidentiality when discussing Clients, or when documenting progress.

#### **5. Evaluation.**

- 5.1 RMTs make periodic evaluations of the music therapy methods being used and the responses of the Client/s. On the basis of these evaluations, service effectiveness is monitored and changes may be implemented.
- 5.2 Where appropriate the RMT may use evaluation tools, such as questionnaires, self-reports, checklists, rating scales, time sampling or other appropriate method of recording response.

## **6. Documentation.**

- 6.1 RMTs use language that is professional, jargon-free, objective and conveys respect for the dignity of all persons.
- 6.2 RMTs document information about the Client's source of referral, assessment procedures and outcomes, aims and objectives for the program, Client responses and other evaluation information.
- 6.3 RMTs keep this documentation in a systematic manner.
- 6.4 RMTs keep documentation in a safe place, in order to maintain security of the Client/s disclosures.
- 6.5 RMTs maintain progress notes in the Client/s files where required by the facility.
- 6.6 Periodic summaries of Client progress may be sent to the referring agency or professional, with informed consent of the Client.

## **7. Termination.**

- 7.1 RMTs work towards termination with a Client when:
  - it is clear that the goals of therapy have been reached,
  - the Client is no longer gaining benefits from the music therapy program, or
  - discharge from the facility/program is imminent
- 7.2 RMTs plan and prepare the Client for termination of therapy services relative to the length and depth of the therapeutic relationship, and the needs of the Client.
- 7.3 RMTs write summary notes on termination of therapy and may provide these to the referring agency, and/or Client, as required.