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Lyric Analysis and Songwriting with Adolescent's Processing Complex Trauma

Capstone Thesis Option #1

Lesley University

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Music Therapy

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Abstract

This study examines how lyric analysis and songwriting can aid adolescents processing complex developmental traumas. The use of music, lyric analysis, and songwriting can provide a space for adolescents to express themselves and process their struggles they have encountered in their lives. Music, lyric analysis, and songwriting can also be used as a way for adolescents to build their self-identity and help them to make important life decisions. These concepts are all related to the attachment, self-regulation, and competency (ARC) model created by Blaustein & Kinniburgh in 2005. This model is used in treatment with children and adolescents who have experienced complex developmental traumas. Music, lyric analysis, and songwriting were also used in this study as a resource and resiliency tool for the participants. This study determined the effectiveness of using music, lyrics analysis and songwriting with adolescents who have experienced complex developmental trauma through a method designed and implemented with eight adolescent participants at a therapeutic residential school. It was found that the method was an effective intervention used with the adolescents to express themselves and form self-identities, while also talking about positive and negative relationships amongst each other in a group treatment setting.

Keywords: complex developmental trauma, attachment, self-regulation, and competency (ARC) model, resource-oriented music therapy (ROMT), lyric analysis, songwriting, adolescents

Lyric Analysis and Songwriting with Adolescent's Processing Complex Trauma

Introduction

The attachment, self-regulation and competency model (ARC; Blaustein & Kinniburgh; 2005), is an attachment style approach that is used often with adolescents who have experienced complex traumas. According to Blaustein and Kinniburgh (2010), complex developmental trauma can vary in type and impact, and is also experienced differently throughout the developmental stages (p. 4). Trauma is also experienced in different contexts, such as family, community, and culture, and can also be present through different internal and external resources (p. 4). The psychiatrist Kolk (2005), also states that children's brains are constantly developing between various stages of childhood. So complex traumas, such as sexual, physical or emotional abuse and neglect, community violence and being exposed to substance abuse by caregivers, can affect children's development, which impacts their lives as adolescents and adults (p. 402). Children experiencing these types of events leads to developing unhealthy coping mechanisms in order to survive and meet basic needs. They can also struggle in forming healthy attachments and have deficits in emotional self-regulation since caregivers were not successful in helping them regulate as children (p. 404). This can lead to children and adolescents having difficulties in developing competency skills and forming a true sense of identity.

The attachment, self-regulation, and competency (ARC) model has been developed to help children and adolescents foster resilience from their traumas and help them grow into leading healthy lives in the present and future. This is done by forming healthy attachments with caregivers, helping adolescents develop healthy coping skills, and forming a true sense of self. The main components of the ARC model are highlighted in Appendix A.

Adolescents can form a variety of healthy coping skills that work effectively for them. It is important to build rapport with adolescent clients and to become aware of their resources and strengths. It has been found that many adolescents use music as a resource in life every day to help express emotions and form identity (Fairchild & McFerran, 2018, p. 88).

Resource-oriented music therapy is based around using client's strengths to create inner resources, which leads to resiliency (Rolvjord, 2009, p. 75). Using music as a resource for adolescents can provide healthy coping skills when processing traumas. Combining lyric analysis and songwriting together is a way of connecting personally to existing, preferred music, which then can help aid the songwriting process. Both forms of music therapy can assist in adolescents expressing emotions and struggles, while telling one's own stories and forming a self-identity through songwriting.

Complex developmental trauma can impact children severely. Adolescents benefit from having an outlet to express emotions in a healthy way and developing healthy coping skills to use when dysregulated. Both the ARC model and resource-oriented music therapy (ROMT, Rolvsjord, 2009) focus on fostering resilience in clients. Research with these two theoretical approaches combined in relation to lyric analysis and songwriting can potentially help advance the music therapy field. The research can also bring a focus in both mental health counseling and music therapy combined, as well as provide an understanding to how adolescents process trauma, and also relate to peers through music therapy interventions.

Literature Review

Complex Developmental Trauma

Van der Kolk (2005) explains that complex developmental trauma includes, but is not limited to, experiencing physical injury, threatened death or threat to physical integrity (as in seen in Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010, p. 4). It further includes overwhelming experiences such as abuse, neglect, caregiver absence, substance use by caregiver and psychological maltreatment during childhood (p. 4). An intervention framework was created by Kinniburgh, Blaustein and Spinazzola (2005), called ‘attachment, self-regulation and competency’ (ARC) model is used with children and adolescents who have experienced trauma. (p. 424). The ARC model is used primarily to address attachment needs between caregivers and children and is used in mental health settings with individual clients, milieu of residential level of care, in biological and adoptive families, and in educational settings (p. 5).

The ARC Model

The attachment portion of the ARC model focuses on, ‘caregiver management of affect’, ‘attunement’, ‘consistent response’ and ‘routines and rituals’ (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010, pp. 37-38). It is important for children to have consistency in caregiver systems in order to build competency skills and learn to self-regulate when coping with traumatic experiences and triggers (p. 426). Secure attachment during childhood can also aid in having healthy relationships through the developmental life span, leading to a more fulfilling life. Secure attachment also provides children with the coping skills to emotionally regulate when unexpected events happen within internal and external relationships.

In the ARC model, the R stands for self-regulation. Self-regulation is the ability to manage different experiences in cognitive, emotional, psychological, and behavioral

domains (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010, p. 111). The three parts of self-regulation in the ARC model are ‘affect identification’, ‘modulation’ and ‘affect expression’. It is important to understand the various emotions children and adolescents experience, and the behaviors that may manifest. Behaviors that can manifest include self-injurious to self-soothe and sexualized behavior for control and connection (p. 113). Children and adolescents who have experienced trauma may feel shameful and damaged, leading to isolation. Providing children and adolescents with healthy coping skills can be a useful way to help them grow and become resilient from trauma (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010, p. 113).

Children experiencing complex developmental trauma can struggle later in life with various competencies at different ages. When children experience trauma, it can severely impair developmental growth and in turn, effect various areas of life from adolescence into adulthood (van der Kolk, 2005, p. 402). These competencies affect children and adolescent attachments and relationships, as well as self-regulation skills (p. 169). These competencies are spread across a variety of domains, such as cognitive, interpersonal, intrapersonal, emotional and physical/motor (p. 169). Therefore, exposure to trauma can impair development of intrapersonal, interpersonal, cognitive and regulatory competencies. It is beneficial to use the ARC model not only with caregivers but also in residential and educational settings by scaffolding various competency skills for children and adolescents.

The competency section of the ARC model includes ‘self-development and identity’, as well as strengthening executive functioning. Children and adolescents benefit from having decision making skills scaffolded for them in a therapeutic learning environment, which can transfer to the real world (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010, p. 175). It is important for adolescents to learn how to independently function and function in society. Learning how to create community connections through executive functioning skills leads to exploring interests and building self-identity (p. 174). This can also help distinguish between likes and dislikes, leading

to more optimal future possibilities and success (p. 190). Kinniburgh, Blaustein and Spinazzola (2005) emphasize how important it is for children and adolescents to gain assistance in self-reflective information processing. Doing this helps process traumatic experiences and builds resiliency (p. 424).

Resource-Oriented Music Therapy (ROMT)

Fostering resiliency, calling upon strengths and finding positives in the lives of adolescents who have experienced complex trauma is a crucial part of treatment. The subjects examined in this investigation have experienced a variety of traumatic events in their childhood and adolescence. It is beneficial to aid adolescents in discovering their strengths and inner resources. It has been found that children and adolescents often use music as a resource in order to express their needs and self-identity (Fairchild & McFerran, 2019, p. 88). Aiding adolescents in using music as an inner resource can be effective when processing trauma and dealing with difficult emotions and life struggles.

Resource-oriented music therapy (ROMT) is a great model to use when fostering resiliency and focusing on inner resources with adolescents. Randi Rolvsjord (2009), the founder of resource-oriented music therapy, states that there are four aspects to this approach in music therapy, these being resource-oriented music therapy: (a) involves the nurturing of strengths, resources, and potentials; (b) involves collaboration rather than intervention; (c) views the individual within their context; and (d) music is seen as a resource. (p. 74).

When using this approach, one should be focused on client's strengths and resources, as that is the core of the theory (Rolvsjord, 2009, p. 74). Not only does this practice build on the client's inner resources, but it also involves using music as a resource, and building musical competency skills (p. 75). Building musical competency skills can be directly related to the ARC model, in that adolescents building competencies is valuable for their future. It has also been found that fostering resilience through resources

can prevent mental health problems and illness in the future. Resilience refers to the “individuals’ ability to tolerate stress and comprises such aspects as hardness and power of resistance” (Rolvjord, 2009, p. 76).

It is very important in resource-oriented music therapy to work in equal collaboration with the client. This includes understanding client’s needs and meeting the client where they are in order to tap into their inner resources and build resiliency. Collaboration between client and therapist helps motivate to work toward therapeutic goals, and aids in expressing emotions and feeling empowered to have a strong role in one’s own treatment (Rolvjord, 2009, p. 77). When working with a resource-oriented approach, it is important to view the individual within their context. That being what their concept of self may be at the moment and building strengths from that. Also, using music as a health resource is essential in resource-oriented music therapy. Building client musical skills is important when using this type of approach so clients can use music as a resource outside of the therapy setting. This leads to inner access to using music as a coping skill when needed. It has even been found that people tend to use music in everyday life in relation to health and quality of life (p. 83).

Songwriting as Resourcing

A study (Fairchild & McFerran, 2019) was done with children who were experiencing homelessness and family violence. Children were encouraged to engage in collaborative songwriting and use music as an inner resource (p. 89). The researchers used a collaborative and strengths-based approach within a community context to allow the children’s voices to be heard, as well as to build upon the client strengths (p. 89). The focus of this study was to provide a resource-oriented approach, guided by empowerment and collaboration between therapist and clients (p. 89). Client strengths were built upon and identified, rather than focusing on challenges or deficits (p. 89). The children in this study stated that they identified “music as a psychological resource that supported them in difficult times...[and] provided an escape from the outside world” (p. 90). Through using music as a way of

telling stories, expressing feelings, and forming self-identity, children stated that music was a more joyful part of life, offering hope and that music is everything (p. 98). The children in this study also stated that music was a significant personal resource and that strengths were well represented in the songwriting process (p. 100).

Music as a Coping Skill

Music as a coping skill has been used in previous studies. Ko (2014) did a study where music was used to process life struggles (p. 183). Ko states that songwriting can be used as a form of “creativity and [to] explore subject matter with personal connection to the client” (p.184) and that lyric analysis aids in “developing the communication skills and coping mechanisms necessary for healthy social interaction and positive mental experience” (p. 184). Therefore, lyric analysis can be used as a communication enhancer when process emotions and experiences, which then can be further expressed through songwriting. It was also found that client preferred music was significantly more useful in improving the clients affects and expressing emotions during sessions (p. 187). Adolescents can have a difficult time with self-expression, especially if they have experienced some type of complex developmental trauma and using music to convey feelings can be validating and useful for adolescents (p. 187).

Ko (2014) used the song writing collage technique, where one takes words and phrases from existing songs to use as a beginning structure (p. 187). Later, the client and therapist work together to add personal lyrics into the song (p. 187). Therefore, using lyrics analysis can aid the songwriting process and provide more structure for clients in the therapeutic space. This study found that analyzing original lyrics helped the adolescents involved to discover what the root of the issue they were experiencing was and provided improved self-esteem and health identity formation (p. 187). It was found that songwriting can also aid in developing competency skills.

Songwriting helped to discover the adolescent's values that were examined in the music-making, which was then implemented and promoted into decision-making (p.188). Song lyrics were also used to help adolescents create and form self-identity while using music as a healthy coping mechanism. Lyric analysis and songwriting interventions can be used to aid adolescents in developing many skills used in the attachment, self-regulation and competency (ARC) model, providing them with a more positive future and inner resources.

Fostering Resilience through Music

When working with adolescents processing complex trauma in a music therapy lyric analysis and songwriting setting, it is important to keep the ARC model in mind through personal relationships, emotional expression and self-identity. Myers-Coffman, Baker and Bradt (2019) created a resiliency model to use when songwriting with adolescents who have experienced bereavement that incorporates the above concepts (p.9).

Clients use lyrical and musical creation, performance and musical creativity to enhance emotional elements of lyrics (Myers-Coffman, Baker and Bradt, 2019, p. 9). Lyric creation and lyric analysis also provide psychoeducation in various aspects of life, where music creates both realistic and metaphorical understandings of emotions (p. 9). Music also aids in exploring and building self-identity, and lyric analysis and songwriting can provide a sense of connection and support from peers as well as creating personal connections to the music (pg. 9). Lyric analysis provides moments to problem solve and work on cognitive reframing with clients who have experienced loss and trauma (p. 8). Lyric analysis and songwriting are applied to make meaning of client's lives, as well as provide an outlet for telling stories (p.9). Myers-Coffman, Baker and Bradt were successful in finding that lyric analysis and songwriting was an effective way for the adolescents processing grief to express emotions, relate to one another, and form self-identities.

Use of Lyric Analysis and Songwriting to Process Trauma

More studies have been conducted using lyric analysis and songwriting interventions with adolescents processing trauma and grief. Songwriting can be used as a way for adolescents to express thoughts and feelings associated with experiences, and Jennifer Fiore (2016) conducted a study doing just that (p. 207). Fiore found that continuing the bond with the deceased loved one is actually a part of the bereavement process, and this could be done through songwriting (p. 209). During a bereavement camp that Fiore attended, she performed songwriting interventions with adolescents processing the loss of a loved one. Fiore used group songwriting with adolescents who all experienced grief to form a sense of community to relate to one another, by expressing emotions individually and together, and using music as a coping skill (p. 211). It has been found that songwriting also provides structure and security to allow adolescents to express emotions, thoughts and memories in a contained way, and can create a common bond with others when done collaboratively (p. 211). In this study, the adolescent age group created a song together about experiences with grief and loss. In the songs, the aspects of (a) shared experiences, (b) reflection, (c) appreciation, (d) the loved one's favorite things, (e) emotional expression, (f) role definitions, (g) inspiration, (h) memories and (i) continued bonds were all addressed. (p. 218). The major themes that were represented in the songs were about (a) memories, (b) emotional connections, (c) value of the relationship, (d) adaptation to the loss and (e) questions of death and dying (p. 219). These themes can relate to adolescents processing complex developmental traumas through lyric analysis and songwriting as well.

Songwriting and Mental Health Diagnoses

Songwriting has also been discovered to be an effective intervention tool when working with people who struggle with borderline personality disorder and other mental health diagnoses and struggles, such as depression and suicide ideation. A case study by Janice M. Dvorkin (2012) was

done with an adolescent who suffered from borderline personality disorder, using an objects relations approach. The reason for using songwriting interventions with this client was to help her manage and understand feelings of anger and frustration, as well as to effectively express her emotions and feelings through music as a way of connecting (p. 47). It was found that the client was able to express herself effectively and form self-identity by heightening her self-awareness (p. 50). She also worked to increase tolerance of personal feelings (p. 50). The client was able to perform lyric analysis in a way that related to her life and re-wrote existing songs to fit her life experiences. She was able to express herself in her own words rather than using the words of other artists (p. 51). The client expressed being able to effectively use music as a coping skill to lessen her anger and frustration and had a higher tolerance level for hard to comprehend feelings (p. 53).

Songwriting was also used in a case study with a client suffering from borderline personality disorder and depression. This client had experienced abuse and assault in her life, as well as neglect from her parents (Smith, 2012, p. 204). The client was hospitalized many times throughout her life, where she received group music therapy services. She first started in a music therapy group to improve upon her communication skills in order to express her needs and to increase social interaction (p. 204). After four weeks of hospitalization she was receptive to listening to relaxing receptive music in her room and her affect appeared to brighten and she remained stronger eye contact (p. 205). During her second hospitalization she found songwriting to be helpful in expressing her inner feelings. She presented more engaged in the music therapy groups as well (p. 205). She eventually felt comfortable enough to share her songwriting with the group. This allowed her to grow a stronger self-image and share her story in a more truthful way to foster growth (p. 209). After being discharged, the client engaged in outpatient music therapy treatment where she continued to write songs as a form of self-expression. Although she still

continued to struggle at times, music and songwriting helped her identify positive qualities of herself and move forward in her life (p. 209). It is evident in this case study that songwriting was able to tap into the client's self-awareness and help provide her with a safe outlet to express her emotions. The client then was able to grow from her traumatic experiences, while forming a positive sense of self.

The Songwriting Process

There are many different ways to facilitate the songwriting process. The therapist can provide predetermined themes or songs for clients to re-write or write about. There is a more structured songwriting process such as fill-in-the-blank, which is replacing certain lyrics in a pre-existing song (Baker, 2015 p. 92). Clients can rap over pre-composed instrumental music or create song parodies on already existing songs (p. 92). One can write original songs within a structure, like providing them with a theme, freestyling and creating improvised song creations (p. 92). Depending on the client's preferences, any of these songwriting styles could work. Implementing lyric analysis interventions to preferred music that clients relate to can aid the song writing process as well (p. 95). Prior lyric analysis can provide a songwriting template to use as well as ideas and themes to use in the client's own music. Through this research it is apparent that combining lyric analysis and songwriting interventions can enhance the treatment process of adolescents with complex developmental trauma.

Method

Previous research conducted has shown that lyric analysis and songwriting have been effective interventions to use with adolescents who have experienced various types of traumas. These interventions have been done with children and adolescents who have experienced abuse and neglect (van der Kolk, 2005), homelessness and violence (Fairchild and McFerran, 2019),

and grief (Myers-Coffman, Baker and Bradt, and Fiore, 2019), as well as various mental health diagnoses (Ko, 2014, Dvorkin, 2012, and Smith, 2012). This investigation was conducted for participants to foster resilience, process relationships, form self-identity and help self-expression.

The purpose of this study was to analyze lyrics of participants preferred music in relation to the topics of attachment, self-regulation and competency. The participants used the topics and connections found through lyric analysis to aid the songwriting process. The researcher believes that performing this type of music therapy interventions within a trauma-care lens could amplify positive results. The primary research question was: How does lyric analysis and songwriting aid in adolescents processing trauma while being used as a tool for self-expression and identity formation? This was done through a trauma informed lens (ARC model, 2005) and with the goal of fostering resilience through the use of inner resources and participants strengths (ROMT, 2009).

Participants

The eight participants involved in this research were in a therapeutic residential school for adolescent females due to the experience of complex developmental traumas. Their ages ranged from age fifteen to eighteen. Participants also acquired various mental health diagnoses. The main mental health diagnoses were: (a) post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), (b) major depressive disorder (MDD), (c) reactive attachment disorder (RAD), (d) bipolar disorder, (e) generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) and (f) borderline personality disorder (BPD). Reasons for referral into the program include abuse and neglect from caregivers, sexual exploitation, sexual assault, substance use and violence within the community, mental health diagnoses, as well as struggles in the public-school system. These participants have come from foster care, other group homes, or biological and adoptive parents' homes. Some participants are involved

with the Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS) and Department of Mental Health (DMH). The participants were admitted into this facility either by parents or guardians, previous public-school systems, are court mandated, or have been referred by DCFS and DMH.

A total of 19 songs were used, analyzed and discussed with the participants in the group. The participants were given opportunities to engage in songwriting based on all three sections and themes used in the lyric analysis portion of the method. After analyzing lyrics and songwriting, the participants were observed and analyzed in group discussions.

Setting

The research was completed within four one-hour group sessions with the participants. The four intervention days consisted of a variation of the eight participants, as some were absent on days throughout the interventions process. The researcher, a clinician and another music therapy intern were also present. The location was in a large classroom, with windows lining the back and right side of the room. The classroom consisted of desks with large tabletops attached for writing. The clinician and other intern were placed on different sides of the classroom to assist participants when needed.

Intervention Design

The investigator created a questionnaire based on songs about relationships (attachment), songs about emotions and life struggles (self-regulation) and songs about self-identity and making choices (competency) in order for the participants to choose preferred music to analyze. The format of this questionnaire is found below.

Song Questionnaire.

1. Songs that you like about meaningful relationships (friendships, family, caregivers, mentors, significant others).

2. Songs that you like that are related to emotions and life struggles
3. Songs that you like about identity, who you are and making choices.

Eight copies of this questionnaire were printed off by the researcher. The questionnaires were distributed, completed and then returned back to the investigator. The songs were searched and listened to outside of the therapy room to assess what songs would be fitting for the topic of this research and were chosen based on attachment, self-regulation and competency that contained appropriate content for the participants to analyze. For example, explicit language and minor references to gang involvement and drug use were allowed, but only if it was relevant to the subject's life experiences and helpful in processing trauma. It would be suggested to not implement the following interventions until client rapport has been built and participants have been working together for a couple of months. This may help them feel comfortable expressing themselves in the most authentic way possible in a group therapeutic space.

For the lyric analysis portion of the intervention, the researcher printed copies of all nineteen songs used, which were retrieved from Google and converted to Microsoft Word. There were questionnaires created to assess the participants analysis of each song, as well as their own relation to the song. Week one was an attachment questionnaire, found in Appendix B, based on meaningful relationships, positives and negatives of the relationship in the song and how the participant related to the song. Week two was a questionnaire on self-regulation, found in Appendix C, based on identifying emotions and struggles, the overall message of expressing emotions represented in the song, and how the participants personally related to them. Week three was a questionnaire on competency, found in Appendix D, based on how the artists self-identifies and makes decisions in the song, as well as how the participants personally identify

with the song. After completing the lyric analysis questionnaires, participants moved onto the songwriting portion, followed by a group discussion facilitated by the investigator.

Attachment Week.

The first session was around the attachment and meaningful relationships. This section was based on the attachment section of the ARC model, analyzing and emphasizing relationships the participants have had in the past or are currently involved in. Copies of each song that was selected were distributed to all participants present.

An hour was provided for each session. Ten minutes were devoted to settling into the room, followed by a check-in question. The check-in question was “if you could be friends with one musician who would it be and why”? Energy levels and needs were asked to assess where the participants may currently be and if anything would be helpful for them during the session. Asking participants about what musician they would be friends with was used to start a conversation about relationships. An explanation of the session format for the day was provided to the participants. This included working independently on the lyric analysis, followed by songwriting, and ending with a group discussion based on the questionnaire and personally written songs. The participants received copies of their preferred song lyrics, as well as a copy of the attachment questionnaire from above.

The participants were then given 30 minutes to work on the lyric analysis questionnaire worksheet and songwriting. This was done independently with the assistance of the researcher, the clinician and the music therapy intern in the room. The participants were given time limits and reminders throughout the 30 minutes. The participants were encouraged to use their personal iPods and headphones to listen to the song chosen to engage in lyric analysis. If they did not have the song on their iPods, school laptops were provided for the participants to research the

song on YouTube, with the supervision of this researcher, the clinician, the intern, or staff in the room. Roughly fifteen minutes were given to work on the lyric analysis portion of the intervention, and then the participants were encouraged to finish up the questionnaire and move onto songwriting for the next 15 minutes, where they wrote lyrics in their clinical notebooks.

During this process, the clinician and intern were encouraged to walk around the room and ask if participants needed any support with the intervention. If the participants were having trouble with the songwriting process, they were encouraged to use any themes found in the song they analyzed and the song format when writing their own lyrics. The songwriting formats most commonly used were ABAB or AABB. The songs were also formatted by verse one, chorus, verse two, chorus, bridge and ending with a chorus. Some of the participants songs included pre- and post- chorus's as well. Definitions of these songwriting structures are found in Appendix E.

After completing the lyric analysis and songwriting section of the intervention, a group discussion about the participants songs was facilitated in a twenty-minute time frame. Before the participants shared the questionnaire answers, a 30-second to one-minute snippet of each song they analyzed (middle or end of the first verse into the chorus) was played from the researcher's phone. Spotify was used to play each song over a Bluetooth speaker. Then, each participant was encouraged to share any answers from the questionnaire with the group, as well as any parts of the song that they related to. They also were encouraged to share a part of their own song if they completed one.

During the discussion, the investigator asked the following prompting questions: (a) what was the song about, (b) how do you relate to the song, and (c) do any other participants relate to anything this participant has shared. This helped to assess how each participant processed the song they analyzed, as well as the song they wrote in relation to the trauma they have

experienced. Asking if other participants relate to what was discussed was to see participant relations in life experiences and to promote connection between group members. The session finished with concluding statements about the content that was discussed, and participants gathered their belongings and lined up to transition to their rooms.

Self-Regulation and Competency Weeks.

The above session format was used for the following two sessions, but for emotion and life struggles (self-regulation) related song, and self-identity and making choices (competency) related songs. The check-in question for week two, self-regulation, was “what do you think the famous musician you chose to be friends with does to cope when they are upset?” in order to connect to the attachment week question. Energy levels and needs were assessed as well. The check-in question for the third session, based on self-identity and making choices (competency), was “what is your definition of self-identity?” Energy levels were and needs were also assessed. This was followed by 30 minutes to work on the lyric analysis and songwriting portion of the session, with roughly 15 minutes for both parts. Participants were encouraged to continue working on the song they began the previous week, if they started one, and to include topics and themes based on self-regulation and competency. If the themes based on these weeks did not fit into what they wanted their song to portray, they were able to continue working on the theme and topics from the previous week. Both of these sessions closed with a group discussion and sharing of their questionnaire answers and song listening’s, while finding relations to one another.

Final Week.

The final and fourth session of this method intervention was a wrap-up of the previous three sessions, while continuing to work on songwriting. This session began with a check-in question about their takeaways from the group, as this was the last session. If this wasn’t the last

session of the group, the researcher's suggestion would be to use the potential check-in question "how does songwriting help you process any experiences you have had?" This question was also asked within all three of the questionnaires and during group discussions. During this session, the participants were encouraged to continue working on and share the songs they had written throughout the past three sessions. Another intervention option, if the participants were not interested in continuing or sharing their own songs, is to engage the participants in a group songwriting exercise. The group song should be based on the themes and topics that arose during the lyric analysis and songwriting portion of the intervention method. The group can also choose an existing song that they want to use for the melody and change the lyrics to fit their personal experiences.

The researcher gave the participants guiding questions based on previous group discussions to choose the theme and topics of the group song. It was encouraged for a group member to transcribe the song lyrics that the group was expressing. This provided more engagement with the group members. Once finishing a section of the group song, the song could be performed by group members if it was to an already existing melody and the participants can take the song with them and continue to work on it together outside of the therapeutic group. This provides a musical source of bonding in an appropriate way between group members. Using songwriting with group members who have experienced complex developmental trauma is an effective way for them to express their emotions and experiences, individually or together, and utilizes music as a healthy coping skill.

Data Collection Method

Process notes were maintained to track the participant results based on the questionnaires, songwriting, and verbal responses and observations were documented in detail after each session

by the researcher. Participants moods, energy levels, peer interactions, and peer relations, as well as participant disruptions and refusals were documented throughout the sessions. After each session, the investigator kept track of any observations by writing detailed notes after each session.

Reasoning

This intervention design was created for many reasons. The investigator felt that using the ARC model would be more relevant for this population due to the model being used in other areas of treatment. According to Fairchild and McFerran (2019), it has been found that music is often used as a resource for children and adolescents to express their emotions and self-identify (p. 88). It has also been found that adolescents enjoy using music as a healthy coping skill to aid in understanding of oneself (Meyers-Coffman, Baker and Bradt, 2019, p. 9). Knowing this information, the investigator felt that using music as a way to deepen treatment in relation to the ARC model would be a more effective tool to reaching adolescents who have experienced complex developmental traumas. Songs based on relationships, processing emotions and life struggles, as well as forming self-identity were used to aid adolescents in gaining knowledge in these areas of life. Since it has been found that engaging in lyric analysis to then aid the songwriting process is effective to use when working with adolescents (Baker, 2015, p. 95). Doing this also provided participants with various themes found in the songs analyzed that they could use for personal songwriting.

Results

The data for this capstone thesis was collected in a four-week time span. The data was collected at a therapeutic residential school for adolescent females in a clinical group which ran for a total of one hour a session. There was a total of eight participants in the room, all of whom

knew each other for at least a month, if not longer. The participants were between the ages of 15 and 18.

Setting

The four sessions took place in a large classroom, with tabletop desks placed throughout the room. The classroom also had a large teacher's desk and the room was lined with windows. Along with the researcher and the participants, there was a clinician and a music therapy intern also in the room during the data collection. The clinician and music therapy intern aided in the method implementation process by working with participants who needed assistance or support with lyric analysis or song writing.

Participants

The songs chosen for each participant were based on (a) attachment, (b) self-regulation, and (c) competency. The eight clients suffered from various mental health diagnoses. Those diagnoses being bipolar disorder, major depressive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), reactive-attachment disorder, borderline personality disorder, persistent depressive disorder, and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Their trauma histories consisted of abuse, neglect, separation from their families, community violence, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and substance use. A table of the participants age, diagnoses, trauma histories and the songs chosen for lyric analysis are presented in Table 1.0.

Week One - Attachment

The first session, based on attachment, began with a check-in question. The check-in question was "what famous musician would you be friends with and why?" This sparked a lively conversation with the participants. A theme that then emerged was participants would rather listen to music of artists who provide truthful content that they can relate to. When advised to

work on the attachment lyric analysis worksheet, there was resistance from some participants.

Despite the resistance, all subjects participated in the intervention, other than participant H, who was in the hospital.

Lyric Analysis.

For this section, the participants filled out the questionnaires and provided insight during the group discussion. Participant A, he stated that the theme in the song “Sorry” (Frangipane & Kurstin, 2017) was about being sorry to your partner, but also feeling like the artist was in the wrong relationship. This participant was able to state that she had a connection to his song, specifically on lyrical lines of “I’m sorry to my unknown lover,” and “didn’t mean to leave you and all the things that we had behind ” due to a past relationship experience.

Participant B also provided great insight about the song she analyzed, “Lightening in a Bottle” (Dales, Wright, Kirkpatrick & Gomez, 2013). She highlighted that the theme of the song was about a surface-level relationship and didn’t dig deep into the struggles or emotions behind relationship. One line that stuck out to this participant was “never change who you are.” During the discussion she stated that it is very important to not lose sight of who you are when you are in a relationship and provided great insight and understanding around this concept.

Participant C analyzed the song “Crooked Smile” (Harrison, Smith, Cole & Parrino, 2013). She stated that the theme of the song was about a woman changing herself for a man over a lack of self-love. She also stated that she was able to relate to the theme in the song and took the overall message as to not change yourself for anyone. This related to participants B’s theme as well.

Participant D stated that the song “Like to be You” (Michaels, Harris & Mendes, 2018) overall theme was wanting to understand a significant other and getting frustrated when they don’t understand one another. The lyrics highlighted in this song were “I don’t know what it’s

like to be you,” and “tell me what’s inside of your head no matter what you say, I won’t love you less.”

Participant E analyzed the song “Listen” (Knowles, Krieger, Cutler & Preven, 2007). She stated that the theme of the song was feeling like people aren’t listening to you, therefore causing trust issues. The participant was able to say that she related to concepts in this song, as she feels many people don’t listen to her and she has to yell for other’s attention. Lyrics highlighted in this song were “you don’t know what I’m feeling,” and “my dreams will be heard.”

Participant F analyzed the song “XO” (Knowles, Tedder & Nash, 2013). It was found that the overall theme of this song was lifting your significant other up when in a relationship and that it is healthy to express feelings in a relationship. This was especially true when the significant other was in a dark place and experiencing something hard in life. The participants were able to state that she related to the themes in this song. Lyric highlighted were “your love is bright as ever” and “does he treat you right?”

Participant G stated that the overall theme in the song “Cupid’s Chokehold” (Davies, Hodgson, 2005) was about a loving, healthy and wholesome relationship. The client stated she related to the concept of the song and that she enjoyed relationships like this theme. Lyrics highlighted were “she even got her own ringtone,” and “we can be on the phone for three hours, not saying one word.”

Songwriting.

Participants A, B, F and G all participated in the songwriting portion of the intervention for the attachment week. Common themes that arose in their songwriting were how negative relationships with significant others and family members can affect you. Participant A wrote a

song to a similar theme of the song she analyzed “Sorry” (Frangipane & Kurstin, 2017), about apologizing to a significant other for a bad relationship. Another theme that arose was learning how to be strong during difficult situations that can happen while in a relationship. Table 2.0, represents the themes that emerged from the lyric analysis and songwriting portions of the intervention, and their connections in relation to the attachment part of the ARC model.

Group Discussion.

Participants were able to find connections between each other’s relations to the songs they analyzed. In the beginning, there was a common theme of wanting to be friends with someone who was authentic and real. During participant G’s sharing, the concept of wanting an old-fashioned relationship was discussed. Many group members related to this concept and shared that they did not like modern relationships and would rather have an old-fashioned style relationship. The participants also stated that they would like to talk about their emotions and feelings more with their parents and other significant people in their lives, stating that communication was key. Participants also expressed a connection between wanting healthy relationships with others and sharing healthy love with significant others.

Week Two - Self-Regulation

The second session, based on self-regulation, started with a check-in question. The check-in question was “what would the famous person you chose from last week use to cope when they are upset?” The participants were able to provide insight around what the artist they chose in week one would use to cope. These coping skills included singing, writing music, listening to music, going on walks, and talking to close friends. When asked the question if these musical coping skills work affectively when they use them, the answer was yes. As the group worked on the lyric analysis portion of the intervention, there were some participant refusals and

disruptions. Despite participants D and F being absent, all other subjects eventually participated in the intervention.

Lyric Analysis.

Participant A stated that the theme of the song she analyzed “Amelia” (Mcdougall, Taahi & Maxwell, 20) was about suicide. The main emotions in the song stated were grief and mourning, as the song is written from the perspective of a friend who lost the girl to suicide. The participant was able to state that she related to the song, and that songs with this message help her feel supported in her emotions and overcoming her struggles when she is feeling suicidal. The lyrics highlighted in this song were “it doesn’t seem right, was it really your time?” and “the Earths just not a place for an angel like you.”

Participant B analyzed the song “How to Save a Life” (Slade & King, 2005). She stated that the overall theme of the song was the struggles of losing someone even though it was best for both parties. She stated that the main emotions presented in this song were sadness, bitterness and regret. The struggles empathized in the song was losing loved ones due to making tough decisions. The participant was able to state that she related to the song in a similar way, and the lyrics highlighted in the song that relate to these themes were “where did I go wrong? I lost a friend,” and “I would have stayed up with you night, had I known how to save a life.”

For participant C, they analyzed the song “Dear Mama” (Shakur & Pizarro, 1995). She expressed that the main theme of the song was struggles a mother of color goes through when dealing with financial, racial and class issues. The participant found that the struggles highlighted in the song were how difficult it was for the artist to grow up with a lower socioeconomic status, and also always running from the police due to his race. The participant was able to relate to the themes from her own life experiences. Lyrics highlighted were “17 years

old kicked out in the streets,” “no love from my daddy cause the coward wasn’t there,” and “he passed away and I didn’t cry cause my anger wouldn’t let me feel for a stranger.”

Participant E analyzed the song “Fight Song” (Bassett & Platten, 2016). She stated the overall theme of the song was about going through different struggles, remaining strong, and growing from them. It was found that there were both positive and negative emotions associated with this song, and the main struggle was losing negative friends. The participant stated that she related to these themes given her own life experiences. The lyrics highlighted in this song were “take back my life song,” “I will scream them loud tonight,” and “my powers turned on, starting right now I’ll be strong.”

Participant G analyzed the song “Little Girl” (Marie, 2016). The main theme of this song was about women forming to societal pressures leading to being unable to express authentic feelings and opinions. The main struggle of the song was women feeling lost and being silenced. The participant stated that she related to the theme of the song due to her life experiences, and that her overall view was to live life the way one wants to, and always say what is on one’s mind. Lyrics highlighted in this song were “I scratch, and I pick my insecurities poke” and “everyday feels like a battle and I always get hurt.”

Participant H analyzed the song “Jocelyn Flores” (Simms & Onfroy, 2017). She stated that the theme of the song was wanting to feel something, even if it was a negative feeling. The emotions behind this song were negativity, sadness, hurt and pain. The life struggle associated with this song was suicide. The participant was able to state that she related to the theme of this song due to her life experiences of feeling stuck. The lyrics highlighted in this song were “in pain wanna put ten shots to my brain,” “post-traumatic stress got me f***** up,” and ever since then, man I f***** hate myself.”

Songwriting.

Participants A, B, and G participated in the songwriting portion of the intervention. The theme of participants A's song was navigating emotions around letting go of a negative person, as well as being who they are. The theme of dealing with life struggles and being unsure of how to manage her emotions in a healthy way were present in participant B's song. Participant G took the theme of women being oppressed by society, causing a lack of self-expression, from the song they analyzed. Table 3.0 represents the themes that emerged from lyric analysis and songwriting and the relation to the self-regulation portion of the ARC model.

Group Discussion.

During the group discussion, there were some common themes that participants were able to relate to each other with. When participant A mentioned related to the struggles of dealing with suicide due to her life experiences, participants agreed with her. They also agreed that relatable music aids them in feeling supported when processing their emotions and struggles. The group also related to the difficulties of letting a negative loved one go in participant B's song. The participants were able to support each other in these feelings.

Week Three – Competency

The third session was based on the competency part of the attachment, self-regulation, and competency (ARC) model and began with a check-in question. The check-in question was "what is your definition of self-identity?" It was stated that self-identity is also the people you surround yourself with and the way you present yourself, and also the activities or hobbies that you participate in. The energy levels were in the average to medium range with a few disruptions and refusals during the lyric analysis and songwriting portion of the intervention. Participant C refused to participate throughout the whole session, and participant E was sent out of the room

towards the end of the session and not sharing her song. Participant G was absent and in the hospital. Other than those disruptions and refusals, all other subjects participated in the intervention.

Lyric Analysis.

Participant A analyzed the song “Loser” (Smyth, 2017). It was stated that the main theme of the song was about a breakup, and that the artist may self-identify himself as a loser because of it. Participant A stated she was able to relate to this song because she felt bad about herself after a breakup, but also that the breakup shaped her into the person she is and identifies today. Lyrics highlighted in this song were “the person that I was, the person that I am, I’m different now” and “you’re always telling me ‘yes’, but your answer is ‘no’.”

Participant B analyzed the song “Lost Boy” (Berthe, 2015). It was stated that the songs overall theme was finding a place that one belongs to. The point of the song was to find a place to fit in and to not worry about what others of about you. The participant stated that she felt the artist may identify as accepting who they are in relation to this song. The participant stated that she related to and identified with this song in similar ways due to her history with her family. The client stated that although she doesn’t have a family now, that one day she can make her own family who accepts her. Lyrics highlighted in this song were “I promise that you’ll never be lonely” and “run run lost boy, they say to me, away from all of reality.”

The song “In My Blood” (Mendes, Warburton, Geiger & Harris, 2018) was analyzed by participant D. The main theme of this song was about the anxieties in life the artist experienced. The participant stated she felt the artist identifies with this song since he expressed his daily anxieties. The participant stated she related to this song due to her personal anxiety and

experiences that make her anxious. Lyrics highlighted in this song were “laying in the bathroom floor feeling nothing,” “just have a drink you’ll feel better” and “I’m crawling in my skin.”

Participant E analyzed the song “No One” (Harry, Brothers Jr, Keys & Reese, 2007). She stated that the theme of the song was about a relationship and wanting someone to love you in a certain way. The participant was able to state that she related to the song in a way that relationships are hard, and love is complicated in many ways.

Participant F analyzed the song “Roll in Peace” (Octave, Onfroy, Gomringer K., Holmes & Gomringer, T., 2018). She stated that the overall theme of the song was about struggles in a relationship, and coping mechanisms used to deal with a difficult situation. She felt the artist may identify with the song as being broken and unsure of how she feels. The participant stated that she related to this song due to needing love from someone badly because she never received the love she needed from her parents and family when she was younger. Lyrics highlighted in this song were “swore up and down that you love me” and “maybe I’m just too g for you.”

The song “All My Life” (Williams, 2019) was analyzed by participant H. She stated the theme of the song was not caring about anything in life, or the consequences of one’s actions. She stated that the artist may identify with this song as accepting who they are after making tough life decisions. The participant stated she related to this song in that she doesn’t care about what others think of her due to her life experiences. Lyrics highlighted in this song were “don’t give a f*** about no consequences” and “too many nights when I had to fight.” The themes found in the lyric analysis portion also were present in the songwriting portion of the intervention.

Songwriting.

Participants A, B, and F participated in the songwriting portion of the intervention. The theme of participant A's song was letting negative people go and embracing who you are and what you love. Participant B's theme had to do with wanting to be who you are and allowing yourself to do so even in tough life decisions. The main theme in participant F's song was her having to decide the best way to spend her time as a kid growing up and making tough decisions. She had the choice between being on the streets and make money in order to survive, or to stay in school and play basketball, which was what she really wanted to do. Table 4.0, represents the themes that emerged from the lyric analysis and songwriting intervention and in relation to the competency portion of the ARC model.

Group Discussion.

There were a lot of personal connections established between group members during the group discussion. While participant A was sharing her song, she stated that the song was about how a breakup with someone can shape you into the person you are today. Participants B and F stated they related to this concept, and that they have personally experienced this before, in that a breakup has shaped them into who they are today. Participant B stated that the song was about leaving a place that is not good for you and becoming who you are, participant E and F stated they related to this concept. Group members were able to relate to participant D's song theme of being overwhelmed and insecure due to anxiety. When participant E was sharing her song, she made the statement that the song highlighted how love and relationships are hard and complicated in many ways, and all group members agreed with this statement. Participant F stated that she was in bad environments with family when growing up, and even though it was

hard to leave them, leaving them was best for her. It was discussed that these circumstances are what shape one into being strong and resilient.

Week Four – Wrap-Up and Group Songwriting

The fourth and final meeting was a wrap-up session. The group members presented with very high energy, scattered and were unfocused when speaking. The excitement and high energy may have stemmed from this being this last group of the semester. The check-in question was based on any takeaways from the group. The group members were able to state that they gained songwriting skills from attending this group and were able to form a deeper connection with music in general, especially their preferred music. Group members were able to discover the creativity skills each of them obtained and learned the different styles of writing music.

The group decided that they wanted to write a song together for the last session and to base it on the current situations they experience in their lives currently. The song ended up being about the past struggles and how that can lead to depression and anxiety. They wrote about how the routines at the residential facility keep them on a strict schedule, and that sometimes they would rather lay in bed all day then have to follow the sites schedule. They realized that they have each other to support and connect with since they have experienced similar hardships in life. The final theme of the song was how they can find ways to support each other, and that they are going through the same experience of following the rules and routines of the site. They all stated that they were grateful to have each other when dealing with tough situations. It was clear that the group members were able to take the songwriting skills they have gained using this method. The themes in the group song illustrated common struggles and emotions and their impact on identity formation.

The last question on all of the questionnaires was “how does music and songwriting help you, understand and form healthy relationships express emotions and process struggles, and form your own self-identity?” It was found that in terms of attachment, songwriting helped to (a) not isolate, (b) understand relationships better, and (c) show different perspectives on relationships. For self-regulation, it was found that songwriting helped in to (a) vent, (b) share important stories, (c) warn someone of a feeling you have, and (d) to release emotions in a more effective way compared to talking. Finally, for competency it was found that songwriting helped to (a) self-express, (b) shape their future, (c) express interests and beliefs, (d) take pride or peace in a situation, (e) show passion, (f) express hurt and pain of past and current situations, and (g) to use as a healthy coping and regulation skill.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to assess how lyric analysis and songwriting aids adolescents in processing their traumas in a therapeutic residential school. The investigation had participants individually analyze preferred music based on the attachment, self-regulation and competency (ARC) model, and then provide space for the participants to do their own songwriting based on the themes from those factors. This approach and model were used based on the effectiveness of using lyric analysis and songwriting with adolescents who have experienced trauma in previous research. When children experience complex developmental trauma, it leads to developing unhealthy coping mechanisms in order to survive and have basic needs met, including forming unhealthy attachments. Deficits in emotional self-regulation can develop if caregivers were not consistent and therefore developing competency skills becomes difficult (Kolk, 2005, p. 404). Building skills in the areas of attachment, self-regulation and competency are important for children and adolescents in order to succeed in the future.

Processing their traumas to work toward attachment, self-regulation and competency was done through lyric analysis and songwriting.

The point in conducting the data collection and implementing the method design above was to determine how lyric analysis and songwriting is an effective tool to use with adolescents processing trauma. The researcher feels that the themes that were extracted from the data were helpful and relevant to the trauma of participants. They were able to provide insight around their traumas and participate in group conversations regarding the content and themes that emerged in the various lyric analysis and songwriting interventions. This translated into themes that were used for the participants' personal songwriting processes, in which they were able to gain more insight about their traumas and process them within the group setting. This was found true, for example, in Fairchild and McFerran's (2019) research with children and teenagers who experienced homelessness and family violence (p. 89).

Other research has shown the effectiveness of lyrics analysis and songwriting with children and adolescents who have experienced complex developmental trauma. It was found that participants used music and songwriting as a way to express feelings, tell stories, and form self-identity. It was also found in Ko's (2014) research with adolescents, that music was an effective coping skill for children and adolescents, and that music aided in developing self-regulation and competency skills (p. 183). Meyers-Coffman, Baker, and Bradt (2019) discovered that songwriting with adolescents were able to foster resiliency and help them in telling their stories and expressing themselves when experiencing bereavement (p. 9). All of this previous research connects and relates to the research done here, in using music as a coping skill to develop self-regulation and competency skills, while also forming self-identity and expressing oneself. The participants in this study were able to find connections with group members with their music and their experiences, and then come together to create their own group song that reflected these ideas and themes. It was also found by the

participants that songwriting was an effective coping skill for them to use in order to regulate, express emotions and develop their self-identity.

In this study, the lyric analysis and songwriting themes found during the attachment week were (a) apologizing to a loved one, (b) surface level love, (c) lack of self-love/changing for others, (d) lack of understanding for others/lack of listening, (e) trust issues, (f) healthy relationships, (g) equality, (h) negative and positive effects of relationships, and (i) learning from failed relationships. This method revealed self-regulation themes of (a) letting go of negative people, (b) oppression of women, (c) suicide, (d) grief, (e) socioeconomic status struggles, (f) absence of a parent, (g) resiliency, (h) negative feelings being greater than feeling numb, and (i) healthy and unhealthy emotional regulation. The competency themes found in this method were (a) bad breakups, (b) self-negativity, (c) sense of belonging, (d) anxiety in everyday life, (e) toxic relationships, (f) relationship struggles, (g) not caring about consequences, (h) letting go over negative people, (i) being yourself, and (j) tough life decisions made at a young age.

Limitations

There were some limitations with this research topic. Given the nature of the residential program, attendance was not consistent. For various reasons, not all subjects were willing to disclose personal information in the lyric analysis questionnaires or songwriting. Some participants also did not share their questionnaire answers in the group discussion, causing a limitation to how much participants were able to relate to each other and their experiences.

The set-up of the room was also a limitation. Given the classroom setting space, there was limited accessibility to each participant in relation to the researcher and other group members. A more ideal setting would have been an open room where a semi-circle could have formed for subjects to see each other and the facilitator. Another limitation was time, as the

clinical groups tend to start around ten minutes late at the site due to the participants finishing up their classes right before clinical group. Also, accommodating for the time to redirect participants when they were being disruptive took out some time during the investigation. One can never know how much exact time that would take in a group given that participants were coming in with different energy levels and moods each group, and it is important to be flexible.

Future research

This method design could be further investigated with similar populations who have experienced complex developmental trauma and can be tweaked in many ways to meet the participants needs. A project with the same main concepts of attachment, self-regulation, and competency could be explored, with a heavier focus on songwriting. This could be done by beginning the session with discussing various songwriting and compositional skills in order to enhance the songwriting experience. After learning those skills, participants could spend more time creating their own songs based on the themes of relationships, expression of emotions and life struggles, and forming self-identity. After spending time individually songwriting, participants could come together and create original group songs based on common themes and relations discovered through previous individual songwriting. Adding instrumentation into participants own songs could be done in future research as well to create a final product. Spending more time songwriting can also provide participants with more enhanced musical competency skills for use outside of the therapy setting.

Conclusion

In this study, it was found that lyric analysis and songwriting can be used effectively with adolescents processing complex trauma. With lyric analysis, it was found that participants were able to find relations to their preferred music and express themselves to the lyrical content.

Participants were also able to relate to one another more efficiently when basing their experiences off of the songs they analyzed. It was found that music and songwriting were able to be used as effecting resourcing skills, and participants were able to use songwriting to express themselves and begin to form their self-identity. Songwriting was also an effective skill and competency tool that participants could use outside of the therapeutic setting. Participants in this study were able to use music, lyrics analysis, and songwriting to explore aspects of different relationships, to express themselves and their life struggles, as well as to make decisions and form their self-identities. This is all related to the attachment, self-regulation, and competency model (ARC) by using music, lyrics analysis, and songwriting as a way to show their strengths and resiliency.

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Appendix A

ARC Model Definitions

Attachment – strengthening caregiving systems for children by enhancing supports, skills and relational resources for adult caregivers. This is done by supporting caregivers in treatment and aiding them in understanding and recognizing their own emotional and physiological responses. Also, by enhancing the connection between parent and child and helping parents become trauma informed (What is ARC?, 2016, p. 1).

Self-regulation – This section focuses on helping children gain skills to control their emotions and behaviors and being able to do so independently. This is done by supporting children to identify and understand their emotions and gaining skills to be able to manage and tolerate them (What is ARC?, 2016, p. 1).

Competency – This section is mainly associated with resilience. This is done by increasing opportunities for choice and empowerment, and also aiding with self-identity formation (What is ARC?, 2016, p. 1).

Appendix B

Attachment Questionnaire

Song title and artist:

1. What is this song about, in general?

2. How does this song relate to meaningful relationships?

(Include three lyrics examples that display how the song relates to relationships (either written or underlined))

3. Is this song about a positive/good relationship, or a difficult/negative one? Explain how you know.

4. How do you personally relate and connect to the relationship(s) described in this song?
(you can choose NOT to share this part)

(Include three lyric examples that you best connect with (either written or underlined))

5. What is the songs overall message about relationships?

6. Who could the song's message be helpful to and why (not specific people)?

7. How can music and songwriting help you in understanding and creating healthy relationships?

Appendix C

Self-Regulation Questionnaire

Song title and artist:

1. What is this song about, in general?
2. What are the identifying emotions/feelings in this song?
3. What are some potential life struggles the artist is going through in this song?
(Include three lyric examples that display how the song relates to emotions and struggles – either written or underlined)
4. How do you personally relate and connect to the emotions and struggles that are described in this song? (you can choose NOT to share this part)
(Include three lyric examples that you best connect with – either written or underlined)
5. What is the songs overall message about expressing emotions and life struggles?
6. How can music and songwriting help you in expressing your emotions and processing any life struggles?

Appendix D

Competency Questionnaire

Song title and artist:

1. What is the song about, in general?

2. How does the artist self-identify in this song?

(Include three lyric examples that display how the song relates to the artist self-identity and decisions – written or underlined)

3. Are there any important decisions the artist has had to make in this song, and if so, what are they?

4. How do you personally identify with this song AND how does this song guide you in making important decisions? (you can choose NOT to share this part)

(Include three lyric examples that you best connect with – either written or underlined)

5. Does this song guide you in making important decisions and if so why?

6. How does music and songwriting help you form your own self-identity?

Appendix E

Definitions of Key Terminology

- **AABB:** A binary songwriting form, in a different order, normally consisting of eight lines, where the A lines and the B lines are still rhyming with one another. (Songstuff, 2000, p. 1)
- **ABAB:** Another binary songwriting form, normally consisting of eight lines, where the A lines rhyme to each other, and the B lines rhyme to each other. (Songstuff, 2000)
- **Bridge:** Toward the end of the song, used as a pause or to reflect on earlier sections and content of the song. The bridge can be used as the climax point of the song. (Songstuff, 2020, p. 1)
- **Chorus:** An independent section that is repeated throughout the song, with identical lyrics and harmonic and melodic structure throughout. The chorus of the song is essential a summary and the main themes or parts of what the songs content is about. (genius.com, 2016, p. 1)
- **Post-Chorus:** A semi-independent section that appears after the chorus, which normally links the chorus to the next verse. The musical and lyrical content of the post chorus is different from the chorus and verse, but always appears in conjunction with the verse. (genius.com, 2016, p. 1)
- **Pre-Chorus:** Another semi-independent section that appears between the verse and the chorus. The musically and lyrical content tend to be different from both the verse and the chorus, but always appears in conjunction with the chorus (genius.com, 2016, p. 1)

- **Verse:** These sections of a song tell the story or move the direction and thoughts of the song forward, leading to the chorus, each verse consisting of a similar or the same melodic and rhythm to each other. (study.com)

Table 1.0

Participant Information

Name	Age	Mental Health Diagnoses	Trauma History	3 Songs
A	17	Bipolar I Disorder, PTSD	Separation from family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment – “Sorry” (Frangipane & Kurstin, 2017) • Self-Regulation – “Amelia” (Mcdougall, Taahi & Maxwell, 2012) • Competency – “Loser” (Smyth, 2017)
B	17	PTSD, Reactive-Attachment Disorder	Separation from family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment – “Lightening in a Bottle” (Dales, Wright, Kirkpatrick & Gomez, 2013) • Self-Regulation – “How to Save a Life” (Slade & King, 2005) • Competency – “Lost Boy” (Berthe, 2015)
C	15	PTSD, Major Depressive Disorder	Separation from family abuse and neglect, violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment – “Crooked Smile” (Harrison, Smith, Cole & Parrino, 2013) • Self-Regulation – “Dear Mama” (Shakur & Pizarro, 1995)

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competency – Didn't participate due to refusal
D	17	PTSD	Separation from family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment – "Like to Be You" (Michaels, Harris & Mendes, 2018) • Self-Regulation – didn't participate due to not being present for a meeting • Competency – "In My Blood" (Mendes, Warburton, Geiger & Harris, 2018)
E	15	PTSD, ADHD	Separation from family, abuse, neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment – "Listen" (Knowles, Krieger, Cutler & Preven, 2007) • Self-Regulation – "Fight Song" (Bassett & Platten, 2016) • Competency – "No One" (Harry, Brothers Jr, Keys & Reese, 2007)
F	15	Reactive-Attachment Disorder, PTSD	Separation from family, sexual abuse, violence, sexual exploitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment – "XO" (Knowles, Tedder & Nash, 2013) • Self-Regulation – didn't participate due to being absent

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competency – “Roll in Peace” <p>(Octave, Onfroy, Gomringer K., Holmes & Gomringer, T., 2018)</p>
G	18	Borderline Personality Disorder, PTSD	Family issues, sexual abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment – “Cupid Chokehold” <p>(Davies, Hodgson, 2005)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Regulation – “Little Girl” <p>(Marie, 2016)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competency – didn’t participate due to hospitalization
H	16	PTSD, Persistent Depressive Disorder	Family issues, violence, substance use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment – didn’t participate due to hospitalization <p>Self-Regulation – “Jocelyn Flores” (Simms & Onfroy, 2017)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competency – “All My Life” <p>(Williams, 2019)</p>

Table 2.0

Attachment lyrics analysis and songwriting themes

Lyric Analysis	Songwriting
Apologizing to a loved one	How relationships can affect you (positive and negative)
Surface level love	Apologizing to a loved one
Lack of self-love; changing for others	Learning from failed relationships; rising up
Lack of understanding for others; lack of listening	
Trust issues	
Healthy and wholesome (lifting each other up)	
Equality	

Table 3.0

Self-regulation lyric and analysis and song writing themes

Lyric Analysis	Songwriting
Suicide	Letting go of negative people
Greif	Oppression of women
Letting go of negative people	Healthy and unhealthy emotional regulation
Socioeconomic status struggles	
Absence of a parent	
Resiliency	
Oppression of women	
Negative feelings > feeling numb	

Table 4.0

Competency lyrics analysis and songwriting themes

Lyric analysis	Songwriting
Bad breakups	Letting go of negative people
Self-negativity	Being yourself (allowing and embracing)
Sense of belonging	Tough life decisions at a young age
Anxiety of everyday life	
Toxic relationships → needs not being meant	
Relationship struggles	
Not caring about consequences	

THESIS APPROVAL FORM

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Title: Lyric Analysis and Songwriting with Adolescent's Processing Complex Trauma

Date of Graduation: 5/16/2020

In the judgment of the following signatory this thesis meets the academic standards that have been established for the above degree.

Thesis Advisor: Tim Reagan

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy J. Reagan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'T' and 'R'.