



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA



Harmonising Identity: A narrative exploration of masculinity and emotions in adolescent school boys undergoing disciplinary action through group music therapy

Lutendo Ndivhuwo Negota
13127722

A mini-dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree

MMUS Music Therapy

Supervisor: Dr Andeline dos Santos
University of Pretoria
Faculty of Humanities
School of the Arts (Music Therapy)
2024

Abstract

This study examined how adolescent participants who are experiencing disciplinary action at their school explore masculinity and emotions through narrative music therapy. Four male participants from a private high school in South Africa attended eight sessions over four weeks. Seven main themes were identified through narrative thematic analysis: Music therapy offers boys an appealing space within which to explore experiences, thoughts and togetherness; Music therapy offers a reflective space to explore identity; Music therapy offers a constructive relational space; Music therapy offers boys a play space for engaging in emotional expression and exploration; Music therapy can facilitate exploration of societal norms of masculinity; Music therapy can facilitate exploration of alternate narratives of manhood; Music therapy can facilitate space to explore hopes for the future. This dissertation discusses these themes in detail and offers reflections on these insights for therapists working in similar contexts.

Key Words:

Adolescent boys, masculinity, emotions, narrative music therapy, disciplinary action, creative exploration.

Acknowledgements

To Andeline dos Santos, your unwavering support amidst my whirlwind of emotions during this journey of becoming has been a guiding light. Your steadfast dedication to my success, coupled with your refusal to let me surrender, has been my anchor. I am immensely grateful for your generous sharing of knowledge, creativity, skills, and insights both personally and as a lecturer. Your contributions are truly invaluable to me. May your commitment continue to inspire future generations in the realm of Music Therapy.

To Carol Lotter, I am indebted to you for the invaluable lessons imparted throughout this transformative journey. The moment you opened the door for me remains a cherished memory. Your personal touch exposed me to an unseen world, and I am forever grateful for the freedom to explore and share my music. May your nurturing spirit and dedication to the profession of Music Therapy endure, forever lifting its flag high.

My sincere thanks to Karen and all the other teachers who guided me in this journey.

My gratitude to the Heavenly Father for placing me on this path and blessing me with talents, along with unexpected opportunities to share them. May I be a source of strength to others, as You are to me every day.

To my fellow students and co-therapists, our journey together was both challenging and fruitful. I am thankful for the ways in which you've helped me grow, for the shared tears, laughter, and fun.

Mrs Twaddle, Mrs Bailey and the school. Thank you for opening the doors and allowing me to work in the school. Thank you for all your help and continuous support throughout the process.

To my beloved grandmother and first music teacher, your absence is felt, yet your spirit accompanies me always, guiding me along this path you set me upon.

To my dear mother, your unwavering support and sacrifices have laid the foundation for my accomplishments. I am here today because of your tireless efforts. Every opportunity you granted me, every sacrifice you made, has led me to this point. This is my tribute to your unwavering love and support. Ndi vha funa nga mbilo yanga yothe.

To my partner, I can't thank you enough for everything you've been and done, for holding my hand and supporting me in countless ways. And most of all, for asking me to share this life with you. You're incredibly special to me. I treasure you. Ngiyabonga Mbhele, sthandwa sami.

To my family and friends, your unwavering love and encouragement have been my guiding light. I am grateful for the late nights, early mornings, wiping away my tears, and your endless support. My love for you knows no bounds.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction	9
1.2 Aims	11
1.3 Research questions	11
1.4 Chapter Overview	11

Chapter 2

2. Literature review

2.1 Literature review	12
2.2 Effects of the past on adolescent boys and young men in present-day South Africa	12
2.3 How South African adolescents express, understand and engage with masculinity	15
2.4 Behavioural difficulties, emotional expression and adolescent boys	16
2.5 Narrative Therapy and its value in working with adolescents	18
2.5 The value of Music Therapy with adolescents	19
2.5 Conclusion	22

Chapter 3

3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction	23
3.2 Research Approach	23
3.3 Research Design	24
3.4 Participants	25
3.5 Data collection	26
3.5.1 Participant observation through video recording	26
3.5.2 Semi-structured interviews	27
3.6 Data Preparation	27
3.7 Data Analysis	28
3.8 Research Quality	28
3.9 Ethical considerations	32

Chapter 4

4. Analysis and Findings

4.1 Introduction	34
4.2 Participants	34
4.3 Overview of the Narrative group music therapy sessions	37
4.4 Selecting video excerpts and writing thick musical descriptions	41
4.5 Creating codes and developing narrative themes	43
4.6 List of Themes	52

Chapter 5

5. Discussion of Findings

5.1 Introduction	54
5.2 Music therapy offers boys an appealing space within which to explore experiences, thoughts and togetherness	55
5.2.1 Music is enjoyable	55
5.2.2 Sense of togetherness in music therapy	56
5.2.3 Music therapy is comfortable	57
5.3 Music therapy holds a reflective space for boys to explore identity	58
5.3.1 Gaining insight	58
5.3.2 Reflecting on emotional experiences	59
5.3.3 Music therapy offers room to explore/reflect on one's current position And growth in boyhood/manhood journey	60
5.4 Music therapy offers a constructive relational space	62
5.4.1 Following the music therapist's rhythm	63
5.4.2 Resilience to push through when there is conflict in sessions	64
5.5 Music therapy offers boys a play space for engaging in emotional expression and exploration	65
5.5.1 Confusion and guardedness	65
5.5.2 Power and strength	65
5.5.3 Exploring the idea that boys/men should cry	67
5.5.4 Feeling good (comfort)	68

5.6 Music therapy can facilitate exploration of societal norms of masculinity	68
5.6.1 Exploring the notion that a man is a provider	68
5.6.2 Exploring the notion that a man has strength	69
5.6.3 Exploring the notion that a man is assertive	70
5.6.4 Exploring the notion that a man is popular	70
5.6.5 Exploring the notion that a man is thoughtful	70
5.6.6 Exploring the notion that a man can be childish or manly	71
5.6.7 Exploring the notion that becoming a man is a process	71
5.6.8 Exploring the notion that men are tall and strong	72
5.7 Music therapy can facilitate exploration of alternate narratives of manhood	72
5.7.1 Who I want to become	73
5.7.2 Values being filled with knowledge	73
5.7.3 Boys value being unique	73
5.7.4 Unclear of the man I'm becoming/ want to be	74
5.8 Music therapy can facilitate space to explore hopes for the future	75
5.8.1 Dreams link to norms of manhood	75
5.8.2 Dreams link to alternate manhood	75
Chapter 6	
6. Conclusion	
6.1 Introduction	79
6.2 Summary of Findings	79
6.3 Limitations	80
6.4 Recommendations for future research	80
6.5 Conclusion	81
References	85
Appendices	
1. Letter to Head of Christ Church Preparatory School and College	
2. Permission Letter for School Principal of Christ Church Preparatory School and College	
3. Information letter for Parents/Guardians	

4. Consent Form for Parents/Guardians
5. Information form for Participants
6. Assent form for Participants
7. Schedule of Semi-structured Interviews
8. School Head of Department for Life Orientation
9. Approval Letter for the University of Pretoria's Faculty of Humanities Research Ethics committee
10. Transcripts
11. Example of Thematic Analysis Process
12. Musical Video Excerpts

Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

South Africa is a multicultural and multiracial country almost in its third decade as a democratic state. As it develops, the country is beset by many societal challenges, including violence and especially high rates of gender-based violence (GBV) entangled in complex understandings of masculinity (Langa, 2016).

Masculinity can be understood as features, behaviours, ways of speaking, acting, and being, considered to be characteristic of men (Gqola, 2007; Langa 2016; Pyke, 2022). Particular forms of hegemonic masculinity may feed violence for some men. An example of this can be found in a study conducted in a prison in South Africa. Mathews et al. (2011) explore the experiences of 20 men who had murdered their intimate partners. These authors discuss the childhood experiences of participants and how such experiences affected their adoption of violent masculinities. Participants reflected how difficult their teenage years were, due to exposure to community violence, being part of gangs, low economic security, and substance abuse. They also described being presented with poor representations and definitions of masculinity. These men explained their longing for positive male role models who could guide their moral beliefs and behaviour. Adolescent and adult participants in both the studies by Langa (2010) and Mathews et al. (2011) spoke positively of their present mothers, who played a vital role in their lives and helped them experience a positive sense of self, despite not having a present male/father figure. Exposure to adversity does not only result in problematic expressions of masculinity, however. Nicolas et al. (2008) add that adversities can position adolescent boys to have a sense of pride in themselves, resilience, self-esteem, and a knowing that they too, can make a difference in their lives and society.

As adolescent boys go through puberty and understanding emotions and how to process them can at times feel daunting for them. In another study conducted by Langa (2016), in which he explored black masculinities with 32, 13- to 18-year-old adolescent boys, participants found it necessary to avoid expressing their emotions as they feared what family members and peers might think or say about them, labelling them as weak, or not “manly”. Khoza (2004), a professor in Health Sciences at a South African University conducted a qualitative study with 27 male and female 15-18-year-old South African teenagers and investigated their views regarding safe or risky sexual behaviour. Participants expressed fear of being misunderstood by their peers and perceived emotional expression as an act that only girls or women should engage in. Adolescents had similar sentiments in the study by Langa (2010). These views do not only occur in a South African context and studies from other countries have found similar dynamics. An

example can be found in a participatory action research study by Payne and Brown (2010) with four active “street-life-orientated” (terminology used in the paper) black men in New York, participants articulated the narrative that “only the strong survive” and a “weak” approach to dealing with life’s challenges was not an appropriate way for boys to behave.

According to Bruscia (2014), Music Therapy as a practice and discipline aims to motivate and encourage self-awareness and introspection through a therapeutic relationship. Offering space for adolescents’ stories to be heard through group music therapy may allow for freedom of expression (McFerran, 2010), to be witnessed through a shared experience (Dos Santos, 2019), and to be seen and honoured as boys who have something significant to say about who they are and the lives they lead (Langa, 2010; Nicolas, 2008). Verbal expression can be difficult for teenagers and engaging with arts-based techniques can foster opportunities for expression in other ways (Dos Santos & Wagner, 2018). Spier (2010), an art therapist in North America, conducted a mixed methods study with six eighth-grade learners who were approaching the stage of attending high school. The participants said that the experience of self-expression through the arts helped them learn coping skills. Spier reported that the experience helped decrease disruptive behaviour, setting participants up for a more positive transition to high school.

McFerran (2010) explains that music therapists can use songs to access adolescents' emotions and perceptions. Music therapy can offer adolescents a space to share their inner worlds and feelings, share a group experience with their peers and the therapist, and express defiance towards the domineering beliefs of adults in a constructive way. McFerran describes how music therapy can be an effective tool in helping teenage boys understand, express and process their emotions through shared musicking. Music-making in a group may offer adolescents a space to participate in and reflect on their emotions. They may observe feelings expressed by fellow group members, offer empathy, and the shared space can be one that celebrates exactly who they are in the present (Dos Santos, 2019). However, Dos Santos (2020) cautions against “becoming-therapists” viewing aggression in adolescents as only “bad” behaviour (without recognising the needs that may underly the behaviour), as it may restrict them from being fully accessible to teenagers.

The music therapy space allows clients to engage in play and expression that they may not have experienced as children living through adverse experiences (Austin, 2006). Music therapists seek to be holding and supportive towards adolescents through being present and open to clients’ ways of expressing themselves (Currie, 2004; McFerran, 2010). As Currie explains, where emotional expression

may be challenging for adolescent boys, particularly when they may have been labelled in a negative light, music therapy group experiences can be particularly useful.

Through this qualitative study, I investigated how adolescent boys explored narratives of masculinity through group music therapy. I work with four high school adolescent boys who were experiencing disciplinary procedures at their school. The boys were encouraged to take part in techniques such as improvisation, singing, songwriting, drumming circles, music-assisted relaxation techniques, and creating art while listening to music.

1.2 Aims

I aimed to explore whether and how Music Therapy sessions within a private secondary school setting, through arts-based processes, may offer participants who were involved in disciplinary procedures opportunities to construct and share stories about their lived experiences engaging with masculinity and to express their emotions. This research sought to explore adolescent boys' definitions and experiences of masculinity; their perceptions of expressing emotion through storytelling and narrative expression; how adolescent boys express their emotions; and how using music therapy in group settings can serve as a means of expressing their emotions.

1.3 Research questions

This study was, therefore, guided by the following research questions:

- (i) How do participants narrate their experiences of and ideas about masculinity?
- (ii) How do participants experience narrative group music therapy as a vehicle through which to explore and process their experiences of and ideas about masculinity?
- (iii) How do participants experience music therapy with regard to expressing emotions and processing emotional experiences?

1.4 Chapter Overview

The following chapters comprise the remainder of this dissertation. I will provide an overview of existing literature on the main the main themes, followed by an explanation of the study's methodology. Then, I explore the data collection process and its analysis. The discussion section thoroughly explores the study's findings and concludes by summarising the outcomes, discussing limitations, and offering recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2

2.1 Literature Review

In this literature review I will explore research conducted on issues experienced by teenage boys and how these inform meanings of masculinity in their world. I will also cover how South African adolescent males express emotions, and how narrative music therapy may be a useful tool for the proposed study.

2.2 Effects of the past on adolescent boys and young men in present-day South Africa

South Africa's history of colonialism and apartheid caused many children to grow up in undesirable and unpleasant conditions. Many children did not grow up with their fathers or were raised with absent father figures (AMINEXT, 2020). When South Africa adopted the apartheid doctrine in 1948, which segregated its citizens on the basis of colour (Giliomee, 2003), people of colour (African, Coloured, and Indian) were seen and treated as inferior, socially, and economically (Mhlauli et al., 2015).

Across many South African cultures, men are expected to be providers for their families but under the apartheid regime, men of colour were economically marginalised, worked in low-income jobs, and were often ill-treated by their employers (AMINEXT, 2020). The regime demoralised men of colour and often left them in positions where they felt alienated from society while they were simultaneously looked upon as providers for their families and leaders in their respective communities (Hunter, 2007; AMINEXT, 2020). Mathews et al. (2011) add that children did not only grow up in a home where their fathers were absent, but often their biological mothers were not present either, resulting in children being raised by close relatives, such as aunts or grandmothers. Mathews et al. (2011) further argue that a context of abuse and neglect affected children's socialisation in the home environment. In addition, gangs, drug abuse, and violence were at times present in the community, which affected adolescents' development and identity. Nicolas et al. (2008) argue that adversities do not always need to be viewed as negative. Challenging events or situations that adolescents experience may allow for resilience, a positive sense of self, and a view that they can positively live past adversities they have faced.

South African understandings of masculinity are unique and complex (Gqola, 2020). In understanding how South Africans define masculinity, Gqola notes that masculinity itself is neither a good nor a bad thing, but how society engages with it determines the effects it will have. Before becoming a democratic state, South Africa was governed by the apartheid regime that demographically and economically segregated people according to their race (White, Coloured, Indian, and Black) (Mathews et al., 2011). Gqola argues

that this kind of structural racism meant that men of colour were not “seen” under the regime; they had little or no role to play in society. Such indignity may have affected men’s self-esteem, sense of self-worth, and role in society. How masculinity was defined and used during the apartheid regime, may have filtered into South Africa’s democratic state and can be one of the reasons for the high rate of crime and violence the country is experiencing (AMINEXT, 2020). Gqola and Mathews et al. (2011) note that the apartheid regime made use of violent means of force, such as high police and defence enforcement in areas where people of colour lived. Police brutality, high rates of imprisonment, and the death penalty are methods that the government used to exert control over black men. This demoralised people of colour, and especially alienated men, who were still expected to provide for their families and be leaders in their communities (AMINEXT, 2020; Hunter, 2007). Pyke highlights how apartheid supported patriarchal and hegemonic masculinity. In a study with 30, 14-18-year-old adolescent boys in Alexandra Township, Langa (2010), a psychology professor in South Africa, explains how many children and adolescents grow up with absent fathers or fathers who may be present, but play a minimal role in their lives. Adolescents in the study expressed a desire for more present fathers and male figures who can be role models of masculinity as they shape their sense of self as teenagers.

Social constructions of hegemonic masculinities, boys and men being exposed to various characters who define masculinity (such as men, women, mothers, fathers, peers and schoolteachers), may leave some boys and men with feelings of conflict about what is meant by the term “being a man”. Other men may express conviction about their definition of masculinity. Giaccardi et al. (2016) state that male-orientated media often represent men as aggressive, dominant, powerful, focused on status and emotionally distant. Often this content is popular among men and teenage boys. Men in media are presented as having powerful leadership roles, while showing little or no interest in parental and spousal roles, compared to female characters who are presented as secondary to men, being weak and emotional, and shown more frequently in parental and spousal roles (Giaccardi et al., 2016; Khoza, 2004). Media often shows men as more likely than women to be engaging in risky behaviours, having uncontrollable sexual urges and always being willing to engage in sexual activity (Giaccardi et al., 2016). These kinds of representations of hegemonic masculinity have an effect on adolescent boys, their views of themselves as men and what it means to be masculine.

Di Bianca and Mahalik (2022) embarked on responding to three varying authors’ works, namely Griffiths (2022), Liang (2022), and Rogers (2022). Through analysing this literature, Di Bianca and Mahalik identified three crucial points, namely that feminist epistemology is crucial in the development of studies of men

and masculinities; that structural change is needed in order to produce and develop healthy masculinities; and that hegemonic masculinity is a theme all men need to challenge, but they also recognised that men with differing backgrounds and socialisation have differing standpoints regarding hegemonic masculinity. In their response, Di Bianca and Mahalik make important points regarding the interaction between empathy and hegemonic masculinity. Certain perceptions of what defines masculinity show that dominance is favoured, while showing empathy and compassion is regarded as weak. Through socialisation, even nonviolent men come to know that showing others' sensitivity is a sign of weakness. Men who show others empathy, compassion, and sensitivity may be viewed as unmanly. Di Bianca and Mahalik add that such perceptions may cause nonviolent men to be unsure about how to express what hurts them, or further promoting ideas such as violence against women being a women's problem.

A qualitative study by Khumalo et al. (2021) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal with 36 young Black male students between the ages of 18 and 30 examined the critical developmental transition from adolescence to adulthood and the development of masculinities and sexual behaviours of young men. Khumalo et al. (p. 2) make the following observation:

...hegemonic masculinities is largely focused on male domination of women, particularly in sexual terms, there are alternative less dominant masculinities such as pleasure of caring for others, receptiveness, empathy, and sympathy that are presented in men's self-care and the care for others. Therefore, improved understanding of complexities such as social pressures that are faced by young men in constructing their masculine identities can contribute toward the development of interventions that aim to empower young men with alternative masculinities that are non-violent, non-abusive, less risky versions of masculinity and those that are more life-affirming and life-enhancing for the benefit of all. (p. 2)

Literature such as this calls attention to the importance of interventions to support these forms of masculinity for youth. Adolescent boys possess the agency to actively disrupt patterns of violence, having their ability to define or redefine masculinity (Bhana & Chen, 2020), even within the complex historical backdrop of a country like South Africa.

In a study by Kiselica et al. (2016) positive psychologists were interested in extensively understanding the psychology of boys, men and masculinity. Through this study, they developed the gender role strain paradigm (GRSP) to further understand men and masculinity. Using this framework, they discovered several characteristics like kindness and helpfulness in boys and men, which can have positive effects on

themselves and others. They argued that these traits are not innate but learnt through socialisation. The researchers identify 11 positive traits of masculinity, namely; (1) *male relational styles*, which refers to the ways in boys and men develop friendships and close relationships with one another, which are crucial to their development of empathy and care. This often occurs when boys and men engage in mutually enjoyed activities, such as sports or video games, (2) *male ways of caring*, boys and men who had been raised in loving affectionate environments where empathy was emphasised and praised, tend to be more empathic with others, (3) *generative fatherhood*, which refers to fathers making a concerted effort to be helpful and present for their children, allows for their children to develop positive emotional, mental and social growth, (4) *male self-resilience*, where we can understand that boys and men are socialised to access their creativity, intelligence, confidence and courage to handle difficulties they may face, (5) *worker-provider tradition of men*, where the notion of men being workers is accepted, therefore encouraging them to work, which allows men to feel positive about their contributions in society, (6) *men's respect for women*, men with a positive self-image, often treat women with respect and have a strong disdain towards violence and any form of abuse of women, (7) *male courage, daring and risk-taking*, often men naturally show forms of daring and taking risks. Boys and men with a positive judgement are therefore able to discern between poor risky behaviour and positive risky behaviour, (8) *group orientation of boys and men*, boys and men often feel comfortable and affirmed when engaging in group activities, which often also form part of their identity, (9) *males forms of service*, positive masculinity asserts that boys and men should positively and proactively support and engage in helping the community and social development (10), *men's sense of humour*, boys and men often use humour to develop and maintain close relationships and friendships. In addition to this, humour helps boys and men heal and cope with challenges, such as high stress levels, or sickness, and (11) *male heroism*, many boys and men have displayed heroism by personifying positive masculinity traits.

Through the use of the forementioned traits, boys and men can tackle life's challenges, contribute to society in remarkable ways and live noble lives. Kiselica et al. call for the psychology profession to shift its view from an interest in the ways boys and men fail in their manning, and perhaps begin to look at positive masculinity as a means of fostering boy's and men's development to positively affect constructs of masculinity.

2.3 How South African adolescents express, understand, and engage with masculinity

Langa (2016) discusses how adolescents growing up in South Africa are exposed to varying environments and ways of living that affect their perceptions of society and how to be, particularly how to be men and

express one's emotions in these societies. Many South African adolescents are also likely to be exposed to neglect, abuse, as well as gangs, substance abuse, violence and aggressive behaviour within their communities (Mathews et al., 2011). In his studies, Langa (2010, 2016) found that adolescent boys struggle to express their emotions, often resorting to hiding or covering them up to avoid being labelled as weak. Adolescent boys often feel that they have two sides or selves; the one side that they present to the outside world, and another self they only reveal when around those they have close relationships with (Haen, 2011). In another study in Limpopo, adolescent boys and girls described engaging in bullying, becoming friends with other boys who appear to have more power in their social circles or other behaviours (e.g., partying in places they should not be, or use of substances) as a form of escapism, or engaging in risky sexual practices to feel a sense of control or power in their peer groups (Khoza, 2004). Boys noted that their fathers and other men in their lives had not modelled talking about their emotions (Langa, 2016). In both the studies by Langa (2010) and Mathews et al. (2011), participants said that speaking to their mothers about their emotions and feelings was easier than with their fathers. Participants in Langa's (2016) and Khoza's (2004) studies felt that seeking help or therapy was more appropriate for girls and women to do, as opposed to boys and men.

In some environments, boys and men may feel a sense of fear, hesitancy or discomfort at the idea of seeking therapy (Khoza, 2004; Langa, 2016; McFerran, 2010). There may be a need to provide some men with assistance to enable them to be active participants in the process of healing and combat their fear of seeking therapy (Langa, 2010). Engaging in therapy with teenage boys is valuable when the therapeutic space offers elements such as "metaphor, humour, surprise, counterintuitive responses and relationship" (Haen, 2011, p.24). Haen adds that when teenagers experience validation within therapy, their perceptions of the process begin to change.

2.4 Behavioural difficulties, emotional expression and adolescent boys

Adolescents often undergo a turmoil of emotions and experience physical and mental changes (Pitsoane & Gasa, 2018). Cobbett (2009) suggests that when adolescents lack consistent types of attachments from parents and caregivers, who may be grappling with their own emotional issues or addictions, young people tend to act out. In addition to "underlying patterns of social deprivation, experiences of trauma, cultural issues, organic and psychological conditions" (p. 16), adolescent boys are also attempting to make sense of changes in their bodies, societal expectations, and their relationships with friends and peers (Pitsoane & Gasa).

Pitsoane and Gasas argue that as boys develop their sense of closeness in relationships with those around them, independence, and agency, it is imperative that their fathers be present emotionally, physically, and mentally. This presence helps adolescent boys develop their own sense of becoming-men. The presence of a father may assist them in developing positive coping skills and resilience to overcome challenges (Kiselica et al., 2016; Pitsoane & Gasas).

Teenage boys who have experienced disciplinary procedures at school may be viewed as “problematic” or “troublesome” adolescents, a stereotypical view, which may not necessarily be true (Payne & Brown, 2010). Adolescent boys who have experienced disciplinary procedures at school have individual experiences of their own lives as becoming-adolescents, narratives that may not have been offered a space to be heard (Nicolas et al., 2008; Payne & Brown, 2010).

Nicolas et al. (2008) were interested in critically reflecting on and critiquing social science studies that have pathologised black youth in America and have used language that may be perceived as problematic. The authors engaged with the theme of resilience in adolescents. They suggest that resilience could actually be understood as adolescents’ capacity and ability to manage and function in adversities they face. Langa (2016), a psychologist in South Africa, argues that perhaps adolescent boys do not need to be viewed as needing remediation, but rather space to express themselves for who they are. Cobbett (2009) agrees and suggests that therapists may consider implementing a school-based music therapy programme (SEBD) with various advantages. These include reducing negative perceptions of therapy and eliminating the stigma that children and parents may associate with the need for therapy. Such a programme provides a safe space within the school environment, allowing adolescents to reconsider the meaning of their surroundings. Additionally, it offers the advantage of adolescents committing to and attending sessions within the familiar school setting, eliminating the need to travel to a separate therapy practice. According to Chong and Kim (2010), music therapy programmes implemented within a school setting for adolescents dealing with behavioural issues have proven to be positive. These programmes centre on the adolescent within their school context rather than a clinical setting and music activities employed in these programs contribute to enhancing adolescents’ self-concept, self-confidence, self-worth, and socialisation skills. Kruger and Prinsloo (2008) suggest that adolescents’ school-related behaviours can be viewed as expressions of their resilience and fulfilment of their abilities. Therefore, these behaviours should be validated and considered in order to assist them in channelling their emotions and conduct.

Dos Santos (2019) a music therapist in South Africa, conducted group music therapy with adolescent boys and girls in Gauteng, who were referred for aggression. She notes that viewing adolescents who have specifically been referred for therapy for aggressive behaviour as “aggressive” and having “problematic

behaviour” and who need assistance in changing their behaviour may be limiting. Rather, offering them a space to express themselves in the fullness of who they are within their lived world (Payne & Brown, 2010) may allow them more opportunities for exploration of their perceptions, possibilities (Dos Santos, 2018), exploration of anger, and self-control (Dos Santos, 2019). Working in a non-judgemental way may help social scientists, researchers and music therapists gain a better understanding of how “becoming-adolescents” perceive themselves and their own understandings of emotional expression within their lived world and personal experiences (Dos Santos & Wagner, 2018; Langa, 2016).

2.5 Narrative Therapy and its value in working with adolescents

Rice (2015) defines narrative therapy as a psychotherapeutic approach wherein the therapist works together with the client, family, or group to assist them in crafting and sharing the story of how they hope to live. This approach offers clients a space to act as agents in therapy and a sense of empowerment. Corey (2014) provides key elements of narrative therapy, emphasising that therapists keenly and respectfully listen to clients' stories with curiosity, persistence, and optimism. The aim is to work together with clients, inviting them to tell their narratives in a new way that facilitates the formation of new meanings and opens perspectives on shared problems in the therapeutic space.

Unlike pathologizing the client, therapists using this approach aim to highlight the ways in which clients show courage in overcoming challenges. Working in this way enhances the collaborative process as clients begin to view their personal stories in a new light, and the therapist appreciation for being a part of the story-telling process. Corey (p. 375) adds that narrative therapists are interested in helping clients transform their perceptions of "painful beliefs, values, and interpretations without imposing their own value systems". Acknowledging the person beyond their presented problems is crucial for narrative therapists, who place high value on forming a therapeutic relationship that emphasizes power-sharing through collaboration, reflection, and the identification of new discoveries as the process unfolds. Furthermore, Corey explains that narrative therapists act as "active facilitators" (p. 376), demonstrating "care, interest, respectful curiosity, openness, empathy, contact, and even fascination as a relational necessity" (p. 376). It's essential to note, as Corey suggests, that narrative therapy proves particularly useful when working with culturally diverse clients, such as South Africans. This approach effectively separates clients from their problems and brings to light the “social, cultural, relational, and political contexts” in which many of the issues they raise can be identified (p. 384).

Kasmaei and Asghari (2017) sought to investigate the effectiveness of narrative therapy and play therapy when applied to a group of children. Their curiosity centred on whether these therapeutic approaches could help curtail impulsivity, reduce aggression, and enhance interpersonal relations within a cohort of 30 children in Iran, aged seven to eleven. The findings of their quasi-experimental study indicated that both play therapy and narrative therapy were effective in diminishing aggression and impulsivity while concurrently improving skills in interpersonal relations. This approach not only provided participants with a space to release excitement and high levels of energy but also enhanced the children's communication, interpersonal, and intrapersonal skills. The utilization of storytelling enabled the children to develop empathy, increased self-confidence, and facilitated the channelling of both positive and negative emotions. According to Jones (2015), using narratives and role-play provides a pathway for young people to tell their stories, enabling them to recognise aspects about their narrative and themselves that had previously gone unnoticed. The therapeutic space offers a platform to share fears, gain insights, and even develop fantasies.

When working with boys in therapy, a good starting point is to demonstrate to them that they play active and crucial roles in the process of gendering, through the sharing of their stories. This approach can assist both them and us, as social scientists, in moving away from the notion that boys are mere victims of socialization. Therapists, in turn, can actively contribute to observing and witnessing how boys reframe and redefine societal expectations for boys and men (Haen, 2011). Haen further elaborates that boys often internalize societal messages and stereotypes about masculinity, whereas identity development should involve a balanced integration of various components. Through therapy, boys may find a space to realize this balance, thus initiating the formation of a positive identity and the creation of new narratives.

2.6 The value of Music Therapy with adolescents

Music Therapy is helpful in that it places focus on the formation of a therapist-client relationship that entails a shared journey of creative exploration and musical interactions (Bruscia, 2014). Music therapy may be *active*, involving a client actively doing and making music, or it may be *receptive*, which refers to a client listening to the music in an engaged way (a music therapist carefully selects music to facilitate a client's process through imagery, making art and discussing the material the music may have elicited (Wheeler, 2016). Wheeler highlights four main techniques used in music therapy namely, (1) *improvisation*, which involves a client making music with the therapist, using any instrument, (2) *performing or re-creating*, in which a client either learns or performs music that is precomposed, (3)

composing, which refers to a client actively writing a song, or lyrics or instrumental pieces and, (4) *listening experiences*, which is a receptive type of music therapy in which the client would listen to music and respond. The music therapist places no judgement on the client and encourages agency and autonomy in the work they engage in to allow for the development of a fruitful relationship, but also as an avenue for personal expression (Bruscia, 2014). Through group music therapy processes, such as playing instruments, singing, songwriting, music listening, dance, and group discussion, participants can gain an understanding of their own thinking, emotions, and worldview. Narrative therapy in combination with music, is a practice interested in the way individuals or groups engage in musicking as a way of telling stories and the relationship between their music and stories. Music and narratives have similar intentions, such as expressing emotions, thoughts and meanings (Eyre 2007).

Narrative inquiry offers ways to better understand oneself and one's lived experiences in the world. Jones (2015) emphasizes the significance of storytelling. Providing opportunities for individuals to share their narratives and engage in dialogue through embodiment, image-making, and improvisation allows the burdens of trauma to be shared within the art therapy space. This process facilitates the opening up of the individual, fostering connections and the formation of relationships with oneself and the therapist. Eyre (2007) describes music and narratives as having similar intentions such as expressing emotions, thoughts and meanings. Eyre adds that narrative music therapy can give way to heightened expression, illumination and expression of stories. Because both practices are person-centred, music therapy and narrative therapy as a combination may be beneficial in affording the client the opportunity to express emotion in more than one way. One of the main methods used is through "clinical improvisation as a solo medium, or in a dyad either with the therapist, or in the context of a group" (p. 5). Emotions are expressed through the instruments in the present moment.

Listening to music can evoke emotions, giving rise to feelings of nostalgia, wonder, and tenderness (Vulilleunier & Trost, 2015). Music therapy allows for non-verbal communication in a therapeutic relationship between the therapist and client, where the client can feel safe to express their thoughts and emotions, while the therapist is able to support and contain the space through the use of various instruments, collective music-making, and improvisation (Pavlicevic 1999). Expressing oneself verbally, as one would in psychotherapy for example, can be challenging for adolescents (Currie, 2004; McFerran, 2010) and engagement through the arts, such as music therapy, may allow opportunities for other ways of expressing emotions, feelings, and thoughts (Dos, Santos, 2018; McFerran, 2019). In his study with

teenage boys, Currie made use of the *Doing Anger Differently* (DAD) model. Currie invited his participants to make use of percussion instruments as a way of expressing their emotions. Currie's adolescent participants found it challenging to express their emotions verbally and the instruments gave way for them to express their emotions, and to experience their emotions differently, through the sounds of the instruments and music. By making use of percussion instruments (i.e., drums, cowbells, whistles, shakers) music therapy allowed for participants to symbolize their inner experiences, being able to physically and emotionally express themselves through instruments. Currie found that by engaging adolescents in this way, they were able to experience group cohesion. Unlike verbal therapy experiences, these adolescents felt that participating in the therapeutic processes that music therapy offered was enjoyable and desirable, even though they discussed difficult feelings of anger and themes around the use of destructive language with the therapist.

In school settings, music therapy can offer a different way of interacting, as well as opening space for adolescents to express themselves and develop self-awareness. Music therapists can hold and contain space for adolescents to express passionate and extreme emotions through shared musicking (McFerran, 2019). For participants, the use of music may generate a sense of relief as the arts offer them other ways of expressing themselves which may not necessarily be offered in verbal psychotherapy. Where music therapists can offer a space for the use of familiar music with adolescents as a launch pad, the space may feel open, accessible and familiar (Dos Santos & Wagner, 2018) allowing for openness and engagement in ways that verbal therapy may not offer. Art therapy techniques provide individuals with an alternative form of expression. In a group setting, these techniques can assist in discovering and shaping a voice within the therapeutic space (Jones, 2015). Music therapy has been shown to improve clients' moods and offers opportunities to express tension, anxiety, frustration, and anger in constructive ways, as well as allowing for catharsis (Chin & Rickard, 2014). Music therapy can offer a space where adolescents can express care for others, empathy, joy, and pleasure (Dos Santos, 2019; McFerran, 2010).

The current study made use of a narrative therapy approach in combination with music therapy practice. This approach offered participants a space to narrate stories about their lives, their lived experiences as adolescent boys, their experiences and views of masculinity, and how they express their emotions, through sharing music in a group setting. Narratives and music therapy may offer the therapist-researcher rich meaningful data, expressed musically and verbally by participants (Hadley & Edwards, 2016)

2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have taken a brief look at South Africa's history of apartheid, the transition to democracy, and the effects of these on adolescent boys and young men. Literature indicating that adolescents find it challenging communicating their emotions is vast. Hegemonic masculinity is common and occurs extensively in South Africa and in other countries. The work of social scientists and music therapists appears to point to a shift away from the discourse on characterising adolescent behaviour as problematic, to exercising a non-judgemental stance. Literature exists on the value of music therapy with adolescents displaying disruptive behaviours, however, limited literature is found on the use of music therapy in settings where adolescent boys are undergoing disciplinary action in South African schools.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the methodology employed in the research. The chapter will include the design, methods of data collection, sampling and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Approach

As I was interested in understanding how adolescent boys explore and make sense of masculinity and how emotions can and are expressed, a qualitative research approach was appropriate. Christensen et al. (2015) define qualitative research as descriptive and interested in investigating and exploring an event, situation, theme or phenomenon. Data collected by qualitative researchers can assist in exploratively making sense of a phenomenon and can help drive further investigations (Elliot, 2005).

There are different types of qualitative research including the narrative research approach, which I make use of in this study. The narrative method helps the researcher to understand human behaviour. I thought that the method was appropriate for the study because the music therapy process allows for the application of music therapy in a narrative setting. Participants can share personal accounts of their thoughts and experiences around the topic of masculinity and expressing emotions while engaging in musical experiences. Butina (2015) explains narrative inquiry as a form of qualitative research wherein participants' shared stories form the primary raw data. She adds that a narrative approach proves valuable when exploring a specific issue or phenomenon, seeking to empower individuals, or aiming to develop a theory. According to Butina, this approach involves posing questions that prompt the creation and development of stories and narratives which help answer the research questions. The researcher is not detached but forms part of the storytelling and narrative formation process. These narratives gathered through interviews, observations, or documents. These narratives and stories are then deeply analysed by the researcher, focusing on sections that offer insight and help address the research questions. Thick descriptive storytelling is often collected through interviews, but can also take place through other forms such as writing poems, performing monologues, movement, drama and music (Wheeler, 2016). Narrative inquiry is beneficial in qualitative research as participants give their own accounts of their personal stories and narratives (Butina, 2015).

3.3 Research Design

This study was conducted at a private high school situated in Gauteng. The sessions were facilitated after school during an extra-mural slot, in a private space so as to not interfere with the schools' programme and the participants' learning time. Running sessions after school was also done in an effort to prevent participants from being stigmatised. The sessions included the use of music therapy interventions and impromptu story-telling, such as prompted and semi-structured discussions, drumming, improvisation, dancing and songwriting. The music therapy process consisted of eight sessions, two hours each, held twice a week over a period of four weeks.

I made use of a case study research design. A case study is a rich empirical investigation interested in looking into the development of person(s), group(s) or a particular situation, event or phenomenon within a real-life context (Aldridge, 2005; Thomas & Myers, 2017). Case studies are valuable in social sciences for "building of knowledge, or theory, from the collation of different forms of case evidence" (Tomas & Myers, 2017, p. 12). Case studies provide "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon or unit" (Aldridge, 2005, p. 11). People's lives can be described and understood in the "dynamic expressions of a lived language" where "language is that of musical form, which is the vehicle for the content of ideas" (p. 15).

I functioned in the dual role of researcher and music therapist (as discussed by Fleet et al. (2016)). I collected the data through complete participant observation, where I, as the researcher, actively participated in group activities as an insider, and music therapist, alongside the participants (as explained by Moser and Korstjens (2018)). Fleet et al. (2016) suggest that it is possible to take a dual role in qualitative research, playing the role of therapist and researcher. In adopting "role-fluency", the following requirements are suggested: "providing clear information for participants, forming an effective research and therapeutic alliance, having a clear policy on confidentiality, and cultivating reflexivity" (p. 329). In doing so, I carefully considered the boundaries between my role as a researcher and therapist.

3.4 Participants

Purposive criterion sampling is a non-random sampling technique in which the researcher indicates specific characteristics of a participant and identifies individuals who represent these characteristics (Christensen et al., 2015). All the participants needed to be teenage boys who were attending a private high school in Gauteng, either in grade eight or nine, actively undergoing disciplinary processes. I requested the assistance of the school's Life Orientation (LO) Head of Department (HOD) in recruiting four participants, who met the criteria. As this was a qualitative study, I was not investigating data from a large sample. A small group of participants allowed for deep engagement on the aspects that matter to them regarding masculinity and emotional expression (as explained by De Fina and Georgakapoulou (2015)).

The staff member sent out the information letter to the respective parents/guardians of potential participants (see Appendix 3). The participants' parents/guardians were required to sign a consent form (see Appendix 4). Participants received information letters (see Appendix 5) and were asked to sign an assent form (see Appendix 6). None of the participants were forced to participate in the study and they were allowed to withdraw at any point, facing no consequences if they chose to. Both the participants and their parents were informed that the music therapy group would consist of eight sessions, taking place twice a week over a period of four weeks, with the adolescent boys.

Because the participants were undergoing disciplinary processes, it was important that I as a researcher did not assume or label the participants as "problematic" or "aggressive" adolescent boys. Dos Santos (2019) supports this view when she states: "When the adult-centric bias of much of the literature on youth at risk is questioned, 'problem behaviours' such as aggression can also be viewed as strategies used by adolescents to sustain health, resilience and empowerment, identity and self-concept, self-esteem, status and, belonging and success" (p. 15). Nicolas et al. (2008) and Payne and Brown (2010) add that adolescents need not be labelled negatively due to their behaviour as this may represent their resilience and coping in adverse situations, which highlights why it is important for negatively labelled youth to have their stories heard. My interest in their participation came from knowing that such learners are often marginalised and negatively labelled due to the disciplinary processes they face at their school. It was also because I wanted to offer these potentially marginalised teenage boys a space to explore, through music therapy, who they are, to account for what their personal views of masculinity are and how they express emotions, rather than approaching them with preconceived ideas of what their definitions and views may be. Dos Santos (2018) describes how experiencing music therapy in a group setting may offer participants

a space for exploration where they can share stories about their lived experiences, learn about each other, and feel support and empathy towards each other. Part of my own efforts to remain open in my understanding of the narratives participants presented entailed practicing reflexivity throughout the duration of the study, as well as in the writing of this mini-dissertation. Reflexivity will be further discussed in the research quality section.

3.5 Data Collection

To investigate the research questions that guided the study, I made use of two forms of data collection: participant observation through video recording the music therapy sessions, and semi-structured interviews. The following sections discuss each in turn.

3.5.1 Participant observation through video recording

I invited participants to participate in various musical activities such as music listening, improvisation, song composition, dance, and image-making. We then engaged in various discussions, which formed part of making use of narrative therapy, within the music therapy group. I structured the sessions to facilitate discussions around the exploration of masculinity and expressing emotions. The use of musical activities enabled the elicitation of data.

Data was collected through complete participant observation, where I participated in group activities as an insider alongside the participants, functioning in a dual role of researcher and music therapist. As discussed by De Fina and Georgakapoulou (2015) and Elliot (2005), a participant observer refers to a researcher entering a group of people who share similar characteristics and participating alongside, while observing how they interact as a group or community. These interactions informed the researcher-therapist about how the participants make sense of these interactions and meaning within the therapeutic-research space.

I video-recorded the sessions within which the participants engaged in various reflection methods (as discussed in the research design section). These techniques served as creative data elicitation methods. In other words, recordings of improvisations, lyrics from composed songs, images created, helped to elicit data for this study, in addition to transcribed verbal conversations that took place in the sessions (as discussed by Dos Santos and Wagner (2018)).

I positioned the camera in an unobtrusive position in the corner of the room. However, in the initial session, the participants became overly aware of the camera due to the reflection of themselves. However, this is standard practice in music therapy (as music therapists index and review the video recordings after each session). To address this issue, I placed a black piece of cardboard over the screen. Although they were aware that I was video-recording the sessions, this adjustment prevented the participants from seeing their reflections without obstructing the camera lens. As sessions continued, the participants adjusted to the camera relatively quickly and soon took very little notice of it.

3.5.2 *Semi-structured interviews*

In narrative research, interviews are usually unstructured (though they may be structured or semi-structured) and are formulated based on conversations that have arisen within the therapeutic space (Elliot, 2005). Elliot explained that unstructured and semi-structured interviews allow for freedom in conversation between the interviewer and interviewee. I conducted semi-structured interviews with each participant after the therapy process was complete. Interviews took place in a private room allocated to me by the school's LO HOD. It is worth considering that the participants may have initially felt the urge to respond to interview questions in a way that appeased me, as opposed to expressing their true feelings. By the end of the therapeutic process, I had developed a warm, trusting relationship with the participants, as building the therapeutic alliance is core to the work. The choice to make use of interviews as a means of data collection was useful in that participants were offered freedom and space to authentically give accounts of their experiences and ideas of masculinity and allowed them to express their emotions. These interviews were video-recorded.

3.6 Data Preparation

After facilitating eight group music therapy sessions over a span of four weeks, I selected video excerpts from the sessions in which the participants narrated their understandings of masculinity (in verbal and/or arts-based ways). This process involved watching all the videos multiple times and then selecting excerpts that contained narratives related to the research questions. I then transcribed the verbal data from sessions verbatim and wrote thick descriptions of the musical non-verbal data. Additionally, I transcribed each interview verbatim. As part of narrative thematic analysis in qualitative research, I read and reread the narratives numerous times to become familiar with the data (Butina, 2016).

3.7 Data Analysis

Esin (2021) provides a practical thematic model that a researcher can follow when doing a narrative analysis of interviews. The model focuses on the content of a participant's story rather than how their story is told, a focus on the information, and not on the way they tell the story. Esin explains four stages in the application of thematic models. Firstly, the *selection of the subtexts/segments*. This involves marking and assembling all information in the transcript that relates to the research question to then create a new subtext. I highlighted the subtexts in different colours and gave each colour a label to help identify the subject matter within these subtexts. Subtexts are treated as separate from the whole narrative. Secondly, *defining the thematic categories*. From the highlighted subtexts, themes and perspectives are identified from words, sentences, or groups of sentences. A different method may involve reading the selected subtexts multiple times to identify themes that arise, which may be an unlimited number of thematic categories. Thirdly, the *selected material is sorted into defined categories*. Various parts of the narratives are separated into thematic categories. Building on the identified themes, various parts of the narratives are organised into predefined thematic categories. This involves arranging and refining the content based on the themes identified in the previous step. Fourthly, in light of the research question and categorised information, the research may *draw conclusions* based on the selected texts and information in the thematic categories. Drawing conclusions involved making meaning of the information in the narratives in the context of the research investigation.

3.8 Research Quality

Research quality refers to research processes that guide the study's design and how it is conducted. Incorporating arts-based methods in qualitative research (e.g., music-making, music listening, painting/colouring, dance and movement) may open up different experiences for participants and add to the richness of the data in the study, offering novel contributions within the social sciences (Bruscia, 2005). Narrative inquiry allows participants to express themselves flexibly, to raise aspects of the topic that are important to them, and to have agency over how the narrative unfolds, its duration and details. Throughout the study, I incorporated various art tools within a narrative inquiry, which allowed for expansive expression.

Bruscia (2005) notes four main areas of focus when considering standards of integrity for qualitative research. Firstly, *methodological integrity* highlights the *appropriateness of the method and flexibility of method*. By adopting the narrative music therapy method, I hoped that potential participants of the study

would feel free to express themselves in their musicking and sharing of stories. Narrative musicking allows for participants to share their stories as they wish. I did this by inviting participants to play instruments of their choice through improvisation, drumming circles and song-writing. Methodological integrity also includes *fidelity* or the researcher's ability to note the possibilities and limits of the study. Finally, the researcher must note the *completeness* of the research. The data gathered should entail narratives from each participant, but may also provide a view of how the participants engage as a group, how they interact with one another, their reflections on the experience of being part of the study, music making and their ability to share their narratives. One of the ways that this was encouraged was by inviting participants to form norms for the group, to which each of the participants contributed. I reminded participants that their participation and stories were of value in the space and that these stories could be freely shared in the space, but not outside of the group setting with individuals who were not a part of the group. Additionally, the researcher opened the space for participants to act freely within the space, allowing the researcher to see participants behave naturally, and to note as well, how they engaged with one another in verbal and non-verbal interactions.

Secondly, *interpersonal integrity* refers to the fact that a qualitative researcher is interested in intersubjective experiences with participants. A researcher does so by *situating* themselves as an active participant aiming to understand participants' lived experiences, giving *clarity of voice* by honouring each participant as an active member, differentiating them as valuable individuals within the research and being *respectful* of members, as well as showing empathy. Throughout the study, I acted in the role of music therapist and researcher, while participating as an active member of the group.

Thirdly, regarding *personal integrity*, a researcher behaves as who they *authentically* are – which serves as an example to participants that they have the freedom to be who *they* are within the study – while maintaining their role as therapist-researcher and professional. Researchers can open up space for participants to share their authentic selves within the therapeutic space as they journey through processes with them and show *care* for participants. By actively participating in the group music therapy processes, participants were able to interact with a researcher who behaved authentically, and not as an outside observer of the group. Fourthly, in light of *aesthetic integrity*, qualitative research involves *creativity*, and a researcher can immerse themselves in how a phenomenon presents within the study, offering space for development, intersubjective connection, allowing for the creation of new experiences and for change. The researcher should be interested in *enlightenment*, namely ways that people are

“affective, physical and spiritual beings” (p. 193), and how phenomena in the study add value and new information to the field. Research is *relevant* when it values participants’ contributions and provides meaningful and beneficial information, offers *spiritual beauty* in understanding people, and exhibits *expressive beauty* by showing how participants interact within a music therapy space, and how they express themselves in music and as human beings.

In qualitative research, reflexivity is the important practice of a researcher taking a step back to ponder carefully, authentically and genuinely about their research approach, their role within the study, as well as how their personal views affect their perceptions of captured data and the participants (Tracey, 2019). Fleet et al. (2016, p. 341) describe reflexivity as crucial and requiring “the practitioners to engage in exploring their self-awareness based on their personal processes when counselling a client” and further assert that “reflexivity is a core concept in therapy”. In my efforts to remain reflective throughout the process, I wrote session notes and made notes about participants’ engagements and my thoughts and perceptions after watching the recorded videos.

Dos Santos (2022) explains that reflexivity may involve engaging in creative, playful and artistic activities. My self-reflexivity involved musical improvisations, art-making and journaling my own feelings throughout the duration of the study. Furthermore, my perceptions of self as a research-therapist (personal reflexivity), my perceptions of the group experiences, shared music, shared conversations and participants’ individual narrations (epistemological reflexivity) all formed part of the exercise. Throughout the process of the study, I received both research supervision from Dr Andeline dos Santos, as well as clinical supervision from Dr Carol Lotter. Both academic and clinical supervision assisted me in playing both of my roles.

Embarking on this research journey as a young black South African woman has profoundly enlightened me. I have long observed the limited platforms for South African men to explore masculinity and express emotions without societal judgment, fuelling my commitment to this study. I journalled about working with four boys of colour and the influence of my blackness on our interactions, shaping language use and vernacular expressions. My music education background intrigued the participants, emphasizing the rarity of such opportunities for people of colour pursuing music therapy, particularly in South Africa. Notably, one participant, who had previously attended therapy prior to this process, expressed that I am the first black therapist he knows, evoking a mix of fear, pride, and motivation in me.

Drafting the proposal prompted contemplation on group therapy dynamics with a female therapist for adolescent boys. As one participant expressed comfort with this arrangement, I reflected on potential bias introduced by my maternal nature, presented both positive and negative influences on the research process. I questioned how narratives might unfold under different circumstances, contemplating the impact of a male therapist or perhaps a white man or woman being in my position.

Conscious efforts to balance being 'cool' and tapping into masculine aspects, influenced by my experiences with my two brothers, coexisted with maintaining authority as a music therapist. My upbringing without a father heightened personal reflections during discussions about fatherhood, revealing excitement at positive narratives challenging traditional hegemonic notions of masculinity. Participants expressing a desire for emotional expression and belief in men freely expressing emotions suggested evolving perceptions. The positive shift in participants' discussions on men, masculinity, and emotions signalled potential changes in societal influences on young boys, challenging historical struggles for positive male identity performance.

Assuming the political position of conducting music therapy as a black woman with adolescents of colour unintentionally highlighted changing faces within my family and South Africa. Challenges in writing about my feelings during the process emphasized the importance of having supportive networks, particularly for individuals of colour pursuing academia and research. Navigating this challenging process as a developing black female researcher in music therapy brought pride and spurred contemplation on the significance of my role for future generations. Encouragement from my research supervisor, Dr Andeline dos Santos, prompted critical reflection on the impact of discussing topics such as these, as a black woman in South Africa.

My personal experiences with my father's abusive behaviour and subsequent divorce from my mother fuelled a desire to work with men engaging in gender-based violence. This process further inspired my passion for gender studies, focusing on therapeutic spaces for expression, particularly for boys and men of colour. Overall, this research journey has reaffirmed my positive regard for boys and men who have experienced adversity. I have experienced personal growth and maturity in navigating therapeutic spaces for teenagers, reigniting my desire and aspiration to work with boys, men, and gender studies.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Any study that deals with human participants requires careful ethical considerations (Arifin, 2018). Permission to conduct the research was required from the principal of the private school (see Appendix 1 for the letter requesting permission from the school and Appendix 2 for the letter from the school granting their permission). Permission from the school was also required. A staff member of the school (the LO HOD) was provided with an information letter regarding the study, who then distributed these letters to potential participants and their parents/guardians regarding the study (see Appendix 3 and 5). The information letter (see appendix 3) included my contact details, to allow for potential participants' guardians to contact me if they required further information regarding the study. All participants and their parents/guardians needed to be provided with thorough and clear information regarding what the study is about, what would be expected of them if they participate, that they are allowed to leave the study at any point in time freely should they want to without any negative consequences (and with no repercussions related to their disciplinary procedures) and that by agreeing to participate, they thoroughly understood the aims of the study. Participants were asked to be video recorded as well as for me to use the collected data for the purposes of the study. The study only commenced once all participants had given signed assent (see Appendix 5) and their parents had given signed consent (see Appendix 3).

I remained cognisant of the fact that the topic of masculinity and emotions is a sensitive one as it could make participants feel cautious about expressing themselves, or afraid to participate. As such, the recruitment and treatment of potential participants was sensitively done. As discussed in sections 3.2 and 3.3, I requested the assistance of the school's LO HOD in recruiting participants who have experienced or were experiencing disciplinary procedures at their school, including learners who may have been suspended. The staff member sent out the information letter to the respective parents/guardians of potential participants. I requested that the staff member not coerce members because they were actively undergoing disciplinary processes at school. Additionally, I requested that the staff member explain to participants' parents/guardians that participation in the study was voluntary and would not influence their disciplinary processes in any way.

I made use of the participant's first initials of their names when collecting and analysing data and reporting the findings to ensure the confidentiality of all participants, which was explained to and agreed upon with the participants when the study commenced. No identifying information is included in any written documentation to protect their privacy. I only recorded sessions with the permission of participants and

their parents/guardians.

At the commencement of the study, I set norms with the group by indicating to members that the sessions are confidential, and members were asked to refrain from sharing information about other group members with their fellow peers/teachers/parents outside of this study. I explained to participants that their information and recordings of the sessions would also be kept confidential by myself and that only my research supervisor would be allowed access to the information. The room that the sessions took place in at the schools needed to be quiet and private.

Excerpts for the video data and the interviews that have been transcribed and deidentified, will be archived in a password-protected online format and stored securely for 10 years. During this time, if other researchers wish to use this data, they may do so.

I practiced sensitivity and compassion towards the participants throughout the study, as it dealt with a sensitive theme. Since the study was conducted at a private school, I was only required to obtain permission from the principal of the school. In cases where participants required additional ongoing therapy due to difficult emotional material that emerged in the research process, I was provided with the avenue to refer participants to the school's LO HOD, who would then refer them to the school's counsellor for further assistance.

The study only commenced once ethical approval had been granted from the University of Pretoria's Faculty of Humanities Research Ethics committee (see Appendix 8).

Chapter 4

Analysis and Findings

4.1 Introduction

Butina (2015) explains narrative inquiry as a form of qualitative research wherein participants' shared stories form the primary raw data. The researcher can begin with the overall reading of the transcriptions and thick descriptions. Analysis involves the researcher immersing themselves in data to make sense of how participants assemble and construct their narratives, the purpose of their shared stories and the rich meanings within them. After reading the text multiple times, I noted how participants structured their narratives, themes that arose, and how these themes were connected. Through narrative thematic analysis, I made meaning of the participants' narratives. This chapter will provide information on the participants, the sessions, the process of data collection and analysis, and the themes.

4.2 Participants

The participants in the study were four adolescent boys between the ages of 14 and 15 years old who were facing disciplinary action at their school. They were learners at a private high school in Gauteng. Three adolescents were 15 years old and in grade nine and one adolescent was 14 years old and in grade eight. All participants voluntarily attended sessions. The participants were referred to the study by the school's Life Orientation (LO) Head of Department (HOD). I thoroughly explained the study to the LO HOD, who was then able to make an informed decision about who might benefit from inclusion in the music therapy group. The LO HOD explained various disciplinary issues and instances of misconduct that the participants had at the school. She further clarified that although none of them were in the process of being suspended or expelled, they were regarded as regular culprits and often went through a demerit phase at the school, leading to frequent detentions.

The music therapy group consisted of eight sessions over the span of four weeks (two sessions per week) with only one participant being absent from one session (session 2). In the first session, we collectively established group norms; each participant was invited to contribute their own set of norms. I did this to ensure that the norms originated from the participants themselves rather than being decided solely by me. I emphasised to the participants the importance of respecting each other's privacy and confidentiality. While their participation and stories were valued within the music therapy group, I requested that these

personal stories not be shared outside of our group setting with individuals who were not part of the sessions. Furthermore, I explained to the participants that their information and recordings of the sessions would be kept confidential and that only my research supervisor would be allowed access to the information.

In the early stages of the music therapy process, the four participants told me that they shared a friendship outside of the music therapy group. When invited, the participants enjoyed doing art processes, expressing that drawing and colouring was a hobby they shared and enjoyed in their leisure time together. Before I started the music therapy sessions, I explained how the process would unfold, including the fact that I would initiate active music-making, whereafter, they too would be involved in music-making and playing. In spite of this, they were surprised by the experience of active music making, perceiving that the music therapy process would be a receptive one in which only I would play music (pre-recorded and live) for them and then ask about their experiences thereafter.

To maintain participants' confidentiality, only initials are used in the description of group members. T formed part of the group because of disciplinary issues, including pranking, making use of other students' possessions without their permission and "backchatting". T was 14 years old and the only participant in grade eight, making him the youngest group member but one who was quite mature. He was often the first to arrive at sessions with great enthusiasm for what lay ahead. T was also eager to assist me with carrying instruments into and around the room and exploring what the various instruments looked and sounded like. T came into sessions with high energy and always wanted to choose the largest djembe in the room. In sessions, he spoke about being the oldest child at home, having two younger sisters and living with both parents. He described how his father spoke about him taking responsibility and that they were both the "men of the home," which he felt intimidated by. When talking about expressing emotions, he said he found it easier to express his emotions with his mother as she could empathise. He found it challenging to talk about emotions with his father, who was often "serious". T explained that he wished he could become a successful basketball player but doubted that prospect due to his height. He also said that he would like to study art and become a financially successful artist in the future.

A formed part of the group because of disciplinary issues including horseplay, being disruptive in the class, behaving rudely or disrespectfully, sometimes getting involved in petty physical fights and, backchatting.

A was 15 years old and in grade nine. When arriving at sessions, A would appear sombre, speaking in a sad tone. By the end of the music therapy process, he seemed more cheerful. A was most interested in impressing me, and often only made musical decisions or verbal comments in sessions after observing what fellow members did or said. In other instances, he would comment to spur controversy within the space. He appeared to like playing the djembe drum with claves and other percussion instruments. He would take rhythmic cues based on his observations of the other participants. A explained that he lived with both his mother and father, who were contemplating divorce. This was causing tension within the home, and A grappled with the challenge of which parent to favour and how he could support both of them in the process. He was the middle child, with an older and younger sister. In our interactions, A explained that the concept of masculinity was a confusing subject as he needed to learn what it explicitly referred to. He spoke of himself as an “emotional person”, crying quite often and finding it easy to express his emotions with others, even if he felt embarrassed by it. Like T, A explained that his father was often “serious” but he has seen him expressing an array of emotions, including crying in front of him. He expressed having great ambition for his future and wanting to become a successful realtor and businessman.

N formed part of the group because of disciplinary issues including pranking, showing insolence towards authority, behaving inappropriately and causing peers to be troublesome or mischievous in the classroom setting, and backchatting. N was 15 years old and in grade nine. He would often arrive at sessions last, in a pensive state. He was quite expressive and often offered profound and abstract reflections in our interactions. N missed session two as his father had forgotten about the music therapy process and fetched him from school early that day. When engaging in music making, N would do so tentatively but would play the djembe drum in a lively manner. He had a particular rhythm that he enjoyed playing, and this became his signature style when he played alone and with the group. The instrument he enjoyed playing the most was the keyboard, and he was eager to explore his voice. In discussions about ideas and experiences of masculinity, N was firm about men needing to be successful and providers for others (i.e., a father should be able to support his wife and children, particularly financially). He felt that boys and men should be allowed space to express their emotions, but they should be careful to express themselves only with people they trust, as society may perceive a man as weak or use the expression of emotion against a man. N was the middle among three siblings, who lived with both his parents, along with his younger and older brother. He described having a positive relationship with his father but found it easier to talk about and express his emotions with his older brother, who was also a role model for him. I found that

the other group members treated N as the person to look up to. N explained that in the future, when he is a man, he would like to be a provider for his future wife, and like T, also desired being able to have a satisfying and successful job as an artist.

M was 15 years old and in grade nine. Of all the participants, M seemed as though he wanted to avoid being in sessions or extensively engaging with me. He would provide short answers to questions and have his body turned away from the researcher, facing towards the other group members. During music making, M would doubt his musical contributions, often asking whether he may begin again or play at a low volume, hoping that the other group members' contributions would overpower his sound. When discussing the theme of masculinity, M often described himself as immature and not quite able to view himself as a man or becoming one. Despite this, he described what an ideal man should be and should look like (i.e., tall, well-toned physique, deep-toned voice, having a high-income job that will enable him to provide for his family). In sessions, M was hesitant to express his emotions or share his views on whether expressing emotions may be problematic or helpful. M lived with his aunt (his mother's sister) as his parents were finalising their divorce proceedings. He was the second child of four children, with one older brother and two younger sisters. M showed some animosity towards his older brother, who was once a pupil at the same school. Many of the teachers described his brother as charismatic. His brother performed well academically and had a good reputation at the school. M felt that due to these views, he was particularly scrutinised when going through disciplinary processes at the school as the teachers would tell him to be "more like his bother". Though he did not explicitly express this, my impression was that M experienced loneliness and did not share a close bond with any particular person in his family.

4.3 Overview of the Narrative group music therapy sessions

Some of the sessions were quite playful and easy-going, while others evoked more difficult emotions. I invited participants to share genres of music they enjoyed so as to incorporate these into activities within sessions. I was also intentional about using age-appropriate music and music that would encourage participants to share narratives about masculinity and their thoughts and ideas about expressing emotions. Sessions were planned ahead of time, but I also offered each participant space to express how they would like sessions to go and what they would like to do. Table 1 provides an overview of activities that took place in all eight sessions.

Table 1
Schedule of Music therapy sessions

Session	Activities
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short introduction of group members and music therapist. • Collaborative formulation of group norms. • Breathing work – grounding participants in the space – prompted by music therapist with pre-recorded relaxing music. • Invitation to be in the space – group asked to think of colour that best describes how they are currently feeling. • Drumming improvisation. • ‘Tell me more about you’ – Metaphor storytelling through an item or symbol. • Introduction to the formation of the group and music therapists highlights narratives she would like them to engage with her on (masculinity and emotional expression). • Music therapist invites group to share about genres they enjoy and plays snippets of each one’s current favourite song and what they love about the song. • Reflections on the sessions’ proceedings.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breathing work – grounding participants in the space – prompted by music therapist with pre-recorded relaxing music. • Group is invited to a body percussion experiences (tapping of one’s own body, vocal sounds and move into improvisation). • Music listening – participants sharing favourite songs with the group and share choreography for the group to do with each participant. • Body scan sketch – participants presented with pages and blank body. Music therapist invites participants to draw on these bodies, what represents themselves and what the world does not know about the men they are becoming. Participants share drawings and stories with the group. • Music therapist invites group to reflect through improvisation: a rap or sing about their body.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breathing work – grounding participants in the space – prompted by music therapist with pre-recorded relaxing music. Participants share how they are currently feeling and how they feel about the process thus far. • Participants request a receptive experience: Music therapist puts participants into a relaxed state, plays steel tongue drum, rain stick and sings. • Participants brought back into present state and invited to share images that came to through the experience and, their general reflections. • Music therapist provides each participant with large sheets of paper and colouring material to do a three-circles drawing – participants asked to reflect three images; <i>What stands out for you in your past as a young boy?; What is going to propel you</i>

into the future, and what will you leave behind? and; There is an imaginary door that says 'future' on it. When you open the door, what do you see?

- Participants invited to write poems after leaving the session with specific themes; A poem about their childhood selves and; a poem about manhood/masculinity.
- Breathing work – to maintain relaxed state as participants exit therapeutic space.

-
- 4**
- Breathing work – grounding participants in the space – prompted by music therapist with pre-recorded relaxing music. Participants share how they are currently feeling
 - (Participants had forgotten to write the poems). Music therapist reintroduced poetry theme and invited participants to find a quiet space within the room to form their poems with specific themes: A poem about their childhood selves and; a poem about manhood/masculinity. Participants individually share their poems with the group.
 - Music therapist then invites boys to draw their reflections of their poems and to share what their images represent and to highlight key elements of their drawings.
 - Music therapist concludes the session with a receptive experience: participants engage in slow breathing prompted by the music therapist and she sings and plays a rain stick.

-
- 5**
- Breathing work – grounding participants in the space – prompted by music therapist with pre-recorded relaxing music. Participants share how they are currently feeling.
 - Group improvisation with various instruments (djembe drums, guitar, keyboard, voice and percussion instruments).
 - Participants invited to draw a sonic sketch, collectively while music therapist plays short snippets of pre-recorded music. Theme of sketch to reflect on their current feelings as adolescent boys in a group music therapy process and their process of becoming-men.
 - Reflection: the group stand back from the sketch and highlight key images of their sketch and develop a title collectively.
 - Music therapists presents each participant with prompts to develop a superhero character for session 6
 - Short breath-work to bring down the energy of the group and conclude the session.

-
- 6**
- Breathing work – grounding participants in the space – prompted by music therapist with pre-recorded relaxing music. Participants share how they are currently feeling
 - Each participant shares stories about their superhero character, the theme song for their character and choreography.
 - Music therapist invites each participant to reflect on how their superhero characters have differences and similarities to their real selves. Group shares stories of how their characters also represent their views of masculinity.
-

-
- Short breath-work to conclude the session.
-
- 7**
- Participants share how they are currently feeling using the metaphor of a symbol.
 - Music therapist asks group to share their feelings through djembe drum-playing which the group will imitate (call-and-response).
 - Each participant is invited to share something about themselves that the group may not know about them.
 - Group then goes into drumming improvisation.
 - Music therapist places two large sheets on the floor, written 'good' and 'bad'. She then gives the group emotion cards and asks each member to place the words where they feel the words belong on either sheet, and to then share why this is their view.
 - The group conclude with an improvisation on the keyboard and djembe drums to reflect on the emotion-card process.
-
- 8**
- Music therapist has individual semi-structured interviews with each participant.
 - Group comes together and do breathwork.
 - Upon invitation to select session structure, the participants chose to do an improvisation and write a song.
 - Music therapist then invites the group to draw, reflecting on their composition and their overall music therapy experience.
 - Each participant shares their images and reflections with the group, and special moments they will cherish from the music therapy process.
 - Group concludes with singing and rapping to their favourite song
-

Initially, participants exhibited a level of apprehension, self-doubt and hesitation towards engaging in musical activities, particularly improvisation. This initial apprehension might have been due to the as well as the unfamiliar feeling of the music therapy experience. However, their comfort levels notably increased over a short period, as they soon showed a greater sense of ease within the therapeutic space, as well as a growing familiarity with both me and my active participation.

I would often begin by inviting group members to share how they experienced their week, or an interesting occurrence they would like to share in the space. Rather than asking participants to describe their emotional state in words, I would invite them to symbolically represent their emotions through colours or shapes. There was no verbal discussion after this activity. This was part of grounding and easing the participants into the process.

The sessions were semi-structured. We began each one with a drumming circle, followed by an improvisation that incorporated various percussion instruments, as well as guitar and keyboard. I introduced additional interventions to facilitate songwriting experiences, as well as the “three circles

technique”, where I invited participants to represent stages of their lives in response to prompts, I was giving them while I played pre-recorded music. Participants engaged in artistic expression through drawing, creating images that reflected their idealised conceptions of masculinity and emotional expressions. The sessions typically concluded with discussions on the interpretations of their artistic creations, as well as their reflections, experiences, and ideas concerning masculinity and emotional expression.

It is my belief that these relatively consistent attendance patterns positively influenced the development of the therapeutic relationship and created opportunities for more dialogues and narratives pertaining to masculinity and emotional expression, as there was more time for such discussions. From my perspective as both a researcher and music therapist, this consistent attendance made it easy for me to track the group’s progress over time and the participants’ experiences.

4.4 Selecting video excerpts and writing thick musical descriptions

I video-recorded all eight sessions. After the group music therapy process, I watched the video recordings multiple times which involved a detailed review of the content captured during the session. This process helped me pinpoint and identify specific segments within the video-recordings that directly pertained to the research questions at hand. My attention was particularly directed towards moments in the sessions where significant discussions took place, and special musical interactions that provided valuable insights into the participants' exploration of masculinity and emotional expression within the group setting. I transcribed these excerpts verbatim. I selected four excerpts of the group’s musical engagements, of which I wrote thick musical descriptions. Some musical interactions occurred when I prompted discussions about masculinity and emotional expression, while others emerged during group reflections, where I encouraged participants to express their feelings and thoughts through music-making and improvisation. I read the verbatim transcripts multiple times to begin the process of analysis. This enabled me to get a feel for the text and to start to identify possible key ideas. I made initial notes while reading through the transcripts.

I highlighted key ideas in the transcript text and used colour coding to identify similar ideas (keeping my research questions in mind). These were the initial ideas I noticed in the text. These are not yet themes. They were just provisional ideas I became alert to and started holding in mind as I was familiarising myself with the transcripts and thick descriptions. I read thick descriptions multiple times, which helped me gain

insight into the groups musical texture and communication. The thick musical descriptions were not highlighted in colour-coding.

Table 2

Highlighting colours related to key ideas in the transcripts

Emotions
Boys/Men/Masculinity
Music Therapy
Therapeutic relationship
Ambitions/ thoughts of future
Self-identity
Ambiguity
Friendship
Acts of pleasure or enjoyment
Symbols

An example of this colour-coding is shown below. It is an example from session two. In the previous session, session 1, I asked the participants to bring a symbol that represented themselves as “becoming men” and we discussed this in session 2. Some of their responses are reflected below:

Session Two,

Time in session: 18:47

MT: So, what about the man who is becoming? What does becoming look like, how would M describe, who is becoming a man? You don’t have to say it out loud if you.... I don’t know if you have that item, or something similar you could think of, or get, or want to describe.

M: I never thought of it as a **different...me**. I thought it would always be the **same me**, just me growing **emotionally** and mentally and stuff.

MT: Yeah, okay, that’s cool because I want us to share about that, so whoever is keen to start, there is no right or wrong, because nobody can tell you what kind of a person you are, or are becoming. Who wants to go?

T: Uhm, I actually did bring something

MT: Okay, you can kick us off

T: So this was technically a concept of my cousin, how do I say.... This book changed my life and how I see everything, how I see colours and how I see people and different things. Not just how I

see people, but people for who they are. So basically when I grow up, I want to be a colourful person, someone people want to hang out with, someone who.... Like extroverted

MT: Mmmmm

A: Are you trying to say someone that's like honoured and respectable?

T: (Nods head)

MT: And is there something about T now, that's similar to the T you're becoming?

T: Yes, but also not, maybe...when I get older, those parts will show a lot more

MT: Mhmmm, M?

M: Mmmm, I didn't have anything in mind. I always thought that, uhmmm, I would gain assertiveness and wisdom, deeper understanding about myself as I go along with life, but so far... I never really get to worry about what that is.

MT: Mmmm and how does it feel now that I am asking you that?

M: It's making me think...uhmmm...like how I'll grow as a man and if I'll be the same

MT: Mmmmm, and A?

A: Uhmmmm, I never really thought that anyone would ask me this question because when I used to go to therapy (I told you the reason why, I think) I didn't really get asked these kinds of questions. I'm usually asked about how I feel about other people and not really about myself, so like this was a change of pace which I like, but I didn't really know how to answer....like.... what would best represent me because I didn't truly know what would best represent me.

MT: Mmm, can you think of three things, three words, something you hope for the future, maybe as you are becoming a man now?

A: I don't consider myself to be a man, maybe not yet, because I feel like there are a lot of things I could improve on. For one, my height, I'm like a midget in my class, I'm the shortest boy.

As I continued to read the transcripts, I applied this colour-coding consistently.

4.5 Creating codes and developing narrative themes

I then assigned codes to each of the parts of the text I had highlighted. I retained an open mind to see what meanings could be ascribed the text (I was not being restricted by the initial labels I had used for each of the colours in my colour-coding system – as this was just a provisional entry point into the data). I grouped the codes together (according to similar ideas) into themes and, where relevant, subthemes.

I chose to sort select and code the data manually and did not use electronic software (Butina, 2015). Butina, in describing the process of narrative thematic analysis, states that codes are to be grouped into distinct categories. These categories form the basis for the formulation of overarching thematic constructs aimed at addressing the research questions. I printed the codes out on paper and grouped them with other codes that shared similar sentiments. This process helped me then form themes and sub-themes, which are shown in Table 3. The information on the table is arranged as follows: first the themes, followed by the categories in bold text, which are in turn followed by the codes formed (also in bold text) and finally by snippets of participants verbatim responses in the faint text.

Table 3

Themes that were developed after coding process and thematic analysis of transcripts

1. Music therapy offers boys an appealing space within which to explore experiences, thoughts and togetherness		
1.1 Music therapy is enjoyable	1.2 Sense of togetherness in Music therapy	1.3 Music therapy felt comfortable
<p>Enjoyed Music therapy: I feel sad today (about MT ending)</p> <p>I feel great now (after a session)</p> <p>Experiencing humour in Music therapy: It felt fun</p> <p>Music therapy is exciting: It became the highlight of my day in general</p> <p>I don't want to leave</p> <p>I think it (the music therapy process) was fun. I give it five stars. The process was fun</p> <p>I don't want music therapy to end</p> <p>Enjoyable due to the surprisingly active array of activities/techniques: When asked about what the music therapy process was like, he responded by saying:) I thought we would listen to music the entire time. I didn't</p>	<p>I felt part of it but all at once, together.</p> <p>Enthusiasm to share: I can't wait to tell you guys about my character</p> <p>Already knowing other group members facilitated trust</p>	<p>Comfortable in Music therapy space: It felt normal</p> <p>Easier to share in the space</p> <p>Validation in Music therapy led to a willingness to explore emotions: We can see how we feel as we go because we matter here</p> <p>Music therapy experienced as beneficial: It was pretty nice cause its beneficial</p> <p>After music therapy, it's easier to express difficult emotions: It's easier to express those emotions</p>

think we would play it that way
and get to do art.

Music therapy felt new but good:

It felt new but I felt okay

A space to reflect due to a slower pace:

It's making me think that this was a change of pace, which I like

Music therapy presents novelty within a boring week:

it's just generally because my day usually goes the same, continuously being boring. Not much happening. But when I come to music therapy, it adds something different to everything else. It breaks the cycle

2. Music therapy offers a reflective space to explore identity

2.1 Gaining Insight

Gaining insights for personal improvement:

I am getting a deeper understanding of myself and things I could improve on

2.2 Reflecting on emotional experiences

Navigating whether a man should be allowed to express his emotions or not:

And we wouldn't know what's normal if we don't feel and express emotions

2.3 Music therapy offers room to explore/reflect on one's current position and growth in the boyhood/manhood journey

I am still childish:

I can't imagine that right now like men playing video games. It has been such a huge part of my life

Reflecting on the process of the transition from boyhood to manhood:

My transition into manhood
I am becoming a man

My understanding of emotions has changed a little bit

Yes, Grown. (Title given to image after sonic sketch)

Exploring: Hurtful when feelings are not validated:

A bad atmosphere hurts my feelings. (If feelings aren't validated, I feel frustrated sometimes. People just don't know how to say they were wrong.

Music therapy is a space where it is "cool: to discover masculinity:

Here it feels cool to talk about men

Good to think about the future:

Sometimes it's better to worry about the future now

Music therapy is a space to reflect on masculinity:

Maturing means getting over fears:

Maturing means moving past "bad stuff":

3. Music therapy offers a constructive relational space

3.1 Following the music therapist's rhythm

I wanted to try hard to keep with your rhythm (to keep up with therapists' change in rhythm) (when playing djembe drums with the group)

3.2 Resilience to push through when there is conflict in sessions

(After an altercation occurred in a session)

I want us to carry on

I want us to continue

4. Music therapy offers boys a play space for engaging in emotional expression and exploration

4.1 Confusion & Guardedness

Expressing confusion:

Guarded: (when playing the drums)

4.2 Power & Strength

Men should be strong:(referring to one's emotions)

Expressing power when musicking:

4.3 Exploring the idea that boys/men should not cry

Boys shouldn't cry:
When I was a child, I used to cry for the stupidest reasons. I thought only girls cry and that they like crying so much and I didn't want to be

4.4 Feeling good (Comfort)

(In Music therapy) **it's okay to cry:**

Expressing strength when musicking:
That was so cool, I want to do that again!

laughed as a boy that likes to cry, or cries a lot for no reason or for comfort. I still cried a lot. that's what I tried to show here. When I got older, but was still a child...

Guys who cry seem weak:

It's better to hold it in cause if guys cry, they seem weak

Awkward to see men cry:

It's kind of awkward with my dad, him crying and stuff.

More comfortable to share emotions with mother:

So I share my emotions with my mom

5. Music therapy can facilitate exploration of societal norms of masculinity

5.1 Provider	5.2 Strength	5.3 Assertive	5.4 Popular	5.5 Wise & Thoughtful	5.6 Childishness vs Manliness	5.7 Becoming a man is a process	5.8 Men are tall and strong
I feel that responsibility on me 'cause I'm the oldest	Men don't show their emotions:	Men are assertive:	Referring to a man: He's good	Developmentally trying to for the model of "a man": But overall, if men act one	Masculinity is defined in a binary relation to childishness:	Lack of clear consensus about the age one becomes a man:	I'll be 10 times better, super big, super-sized

He must be a provider	Dads don't cry: It's kind of awkward with him. Most of the time, he's serious	with people He's great with women	way, we develop and try to act the same way Society does have like, ways they think men should act. We kind of act that way cause that's what we see.	I think I am still far too childish You must stop being childish. I want to stop playing pranks on people	18 and above 16, 17 and above 20,22 25 and above Growth.	Seem strong He's tall, he's obviously grown, grown facial hair, which symbolises his growth
			So we end up thinking that that's how we should be	Throwing a tantrum. I must show those around me that I am responsible	The man I see myself as. I need to be filled up to reach my manhood.	Very big and built up
			Becoming a man will make me wiser:	Not buy kiddies meals I'm very immature.	(Had a bottle as a symbol of how he views himself as needing certain elements	Big and buff, edgy cool guy who is buff and tall, has a full beard and a deep voice
			Growing up in a masculine household. Like my dad who never looks sad and is always thinking.	I am still childish. I need to be way more responsible	that will help him develop into a man)	I want to be strong, gym, diet,
			Men are wise	Lose certain mannerisms, like making noises, or like fart	When it's fully empty (bottle symbol) I will be a man	
			My dad says me and him			

are the men of
the home

noises
around
people

**Boys grow
into men at
different
paces:**

I don't
have the
mentality
of a man
yet.
Masculinity
automatically
makes
me think of
men as
being
serious. I
don't think
men can be
childish.

We're
growing at
different
paces and
in different
ways

**The
transition
from
boyhood
into
manhood
has
prerequisites:**

I wouldn't
consider
myself one
yet (a man)

I don't feel
like I will
truly feel
like a man

I'm not a
man yet

and I don't go
through
something

I don't
really feel
like a man
yet

Initiation
(Speaking
to the need
to go

**Vs.
Manliness:**
He can be a
man and
still play
video
games

through a
certain
stage in
order to
become a
man)

I want to
be
someone
people
want to
hang out
with

Rites of
passage

6. Music therapy can facilitate exploration of alternate narratives of manhood

6.1 Who I want to become

I hope to be a cool guy
some day

Personal definition of ideal man:

Be extroverted,
honoured and
respectable

I want to have joy, care,
be innocent

I want to be smart

Personal ideals of masculinities:

Males (We) should show
emotions like cry,
happy, sad,
disappointed, otherwise
we'll be like robots or
something

A man can also be imperfect:

6.2 Values being filled with knowledge

It represents me, it looks
very fine (reflecting on a
drawn art image)

6.3 Values being unique

I am different from
other people and I'm
unique

6.4 Unclear of the man I'm becoming/want to be

I don't know exactly
who I want to be, I
have question
marks

I didn't draw a face,
I don't know how I'll
be

I want (my children) to
see that I'm not perfect

7 Music therapy can facilitate space to explore hopes for the future

7.1 Dreams link to norms of manhood

For my futures, I drew a dark space, but the light
is the bit of hope I have.

I want to be a business man

I hope to get a wife

But I also wanna be like my dad

7.2 Dreams link to alternate manhood

My appearance does not define my manhood:
I don't really care about my height

He can be as many things as he wants to be, an
artist, big and tall

I have ambitions and dreams

It matters for a man to follow his dreams and not
always prioritize being the provider:

I want to succeed

Desire for future: Happy, satisfying job:

The biggest thing I want is a happy job. Not
unsatisfying.

I want to do what I love.

Desire for the future: some wealth:

This is what I want to be, but I am showing some
sense of wealth...

I don't know what my future holds:

I don't know what's gonna happen in the future, I
don't know how it's gonna go

4.6 List of Themes

With the research questions informing the process of analysis, the thematic narrative analysis approach detailed above led to the development of seven primary narrative themes:

- Music therapy offers boys an appealing space within which to explore experiences, thoughts and emotions
- Music therapy offers a reflective space to explore who they are

- Music therapy offers a constructive relational space
- Music therapy offers boys a play space for engaging in emotional expression and exploration
- Music therapy can facilitate exploration of societal norms of masculinity
- Music therapy can facilitate exploration of alternate narratives of manhood
- Music therapy can facilitate space to explore hopes for the future

These themes will be discussed in detail in chapter 5.

Chapter 5

5. Discussion of Findings

In this chapter, I will focus on the seven themes that were developed during the data analysis. I will integrate literature into this discussion.

5.1 Introduction

Teenage boys facing disciplinary action at school are often marginalised and labelled as problematic and aggressive (Payne & Brown, 2010). Creating space for these boys through group music therapy may prove to be valuable as it is a space where they are not judged but appreciated for who they are. Group music therapy can provide a place for boys to have fun and explore a range of emotions like happiness, sadness, anger and even humour, with the containment and holding of a therapist to help them navigate their thoughts and experiences in a safe space (McFerran, 2019).

The participants shared meaningful stories about their personal journeys towards manhood. Group music therapy offered them a platform for self-reflection on their lives, current situations, past experiences, the people in their lives, and the friendships they share as a group. The process also encouraged introspection as they navigated their transition from boys to men.

Music therapy created a non-judgemental, welcoming space where they could freely express themselves without fear of labels, or the usual scrutiny they face as boys who are undergoing disciplinary action at their school. Throughout the four-week process, the four participants explored and discussed their perceptions of masculinity and their experiences within the group music therapy setting. They also discussed how they cope with emotions in their daily lives. The following sections elaborated on the how they used this process to explore these issues and to express their emotions.

5.2 Music therapy offers boys an appealing space within which to explore experiences, thoughts and togetherness

Music therapy and art-based techniques can provide a wide range of therapeutic experiences and potential, particularly where adolescents may find it challenging to relate to adults due to the disciplinary action they are facing. The music therapy space offered an enjoyable experience. As the therapist-researcher, I participated actively as part of the group, instead of being seen as an all-knowing expert, which appeared to create a comfortable atmosphere. When participants feel relaxed, they may become more open to creativity, imagination and fun. Music therapy acts as a container that allows these elements to flow in ways that benefit the group (McFerran, 2010).

5.2.1 Music therapy is enjoyable

Adolescent boys facing disciplinary issues at school might initially perceive therapy as undesirable and unwelcome. As discussed in the literature review, Dos Santos (2019) and McFerren (2010) illustrate that music therapy creates a space where adolescents can actively engage in expressions of care, empathy, joy, and pleasure. In this study, during the early stages of the therapeutic process, participants themselves began to label activities in the session as "fun" and pleasurable, indicating an organic environment that encouraged new ways of self-expression. Another participant described the process as being the "highlight of... days". Music therapy within school environments provides a secure and unique avenue for adolescents to interact, creating a space where they can freely express themselves (Cobbett, 2009). Kiselica et al. (2016) conducted a study focusing on the psychology of boys, men, and masculinity, exploring extensive work done by positive psychologists. As noted in the literature review, these experts introduced the gender role strain paradigm (GRSP) to study men and masculinity. Using this framework, they discovered several characteristics like kindness and helpfulness in boys and men, which can have positive effects on themselves and others. They argued that these traits are not innate but learned through socialisation. The researchers identified 11 positive traits of masculinity, one being humour. Their research showed that boys and men often use humour to move closer to each other. Humour not only helps in healing but also in managing stress. It promotes fun, fosters supportive relationships, displays care, and eases tension. The following is a transcript from a session:

"MT: Okay, anyone else wants to share how they were feeling when we played the drums?"

M: At the same time, I felt so engaged when it got faster, I felt part of it, I could hear so many different sounds and my own, but all at once, together.

MT: Mmmm, and N, T?

T: Okay, hahaha, (*group starts to laugh with T*) I felt a sense of competition, I wanted to catch up and then go faster than you (*Participants start whispering to each other*)

MT: Let's listen to T

T: Yea, I felt like competing, yea

MT: Okay and N?

N: I felt so ... it had such a nice beat to it and I felt like I could keep up with it.

MT: Okay, so A do you want to start now?

A: No, I think it can be someone else's turn (chuckles embarrassingly)

T: Can I start?

MT: Yea"

During my own reflection, I realised I often took on the role of a "cool" and fun therapist. I actively participated in their jokes, poked fun at myself, and encouraged laughter during activities. This approach created a relaxed enjoyable environment and fostered the development of a warm therapeutic relationship.

5.2.2 Sense of togetherness in music therapy

Ansdell (2016) states that music actively brings time and space together, where musicking creates an atmosphere that generates a strong feeling of unity and belonging among group members. Ansdell suggests that the power of music lies in its ability to stimulate the senses, engage thinking, trigger memories, and evoke emotions in everyone involved. Additionally, Ansdell emphasises that music has a special way of uniting different people, allowing them to connect creatively. As I participated in musical activities with the four boys, their involvement triggered memories, sparked thinking, helped create new memories, and provided fresh insights about themselves and each other. As a result, this shared musical experience appeared to create a deep sense of togetherness, unity, and strengthened their friendship as they faced similar disciplinary challenges in school.

McFerran (2010) highlights teenagers' experiences of fear, hesitancy, or discomfort towards seeking therapy, while Currie (2004) emphasises the challenges adolescents may encounter with traditional psychotherapy, particularly amidst their multifaceted developmental changes. Concurrently, as Langa (2010) contends, adolescents, while shaping their sense of self during their teenage years, frequently

confront feelings of being misunderstood by both adults and society at large. Through music and music therapy, adolescents can explore alternative means of communication, particularly in group settings, fostering enhanced engagement with their peers. Hawkins and Farrant (2022) studied how turn-taking during musical and spoken activities affects empathy and self-esteem in socially vulnerable teenagers. Their research revealed that engaging in turn-taking enhances empathy and positively impacts participants' self-concept and self-esteem due to reciprocal responses from others. Participating in shared activities was also found to boost their personal well-being and encourage prosocial behaviour.

“MT: Okay, anyone else wants to share how they were feeling when we played the drums?

M: At the same time, I felt so engaged when it got faster, I felt part of it, I could hear so many different sounds and my own, but all at once, together.”

As both a music therapist and researcher, I remained conscious of the participants' friendship formed prior to coming for group music therapy session, which might have influenced their collective experience during the process. Significantly, they underwent two meaningful experiences: engaging in group music therapy and embarking on an entirely new activity together. The process appeared to deepen their friendship significantly by the end of the process. Participants actively spent a large amount of leisure time together outside of school, engaging in enjoyable activities, yet seldom engaged in profound discussions. I posit that group music therapy introduced a new avenue for them to perceive each other, exchange personal narratives, and articulate thoughts they typically would not explore. I actively asked the participants at the end of the group music therapy process if they noticed any changes in their friendships due to this experience. They confirmed that the experience had positively transformed their friendship. Eyre (2007, p. 3) suggests that music acts as a narrative, “a form of communication, and a symbolic language”, serving as a way to understand experiences. This sharing among the boys portrays the story of their friendship and highlights how the entire experience was uniting them in a new way.

5.2.3 Music therapy felt comfortable

In spaces where music therapists utilise familiar music as a starting point for engagement with adolescents, an ambience characterised by openness, accessibility, and familiarity is fostered (Dos Santos & Wagner, 2018). This environment enables a level of openness and engagement that verbal therapy might not afford. While acknowledging that participants were friends before attending group music therapy, I believe that the deliberate and non-judgmental approach adopted by music therapists creates a positive, open, relaxed, and comfortable space for clients, allowing them to perceive the therapeutic

setting as comfortable. Group music-making provides adolescents with a platform to engage in and contemplate their emotions actively. Within this collective musical space, adolescents can observe emotions expressed by fellow group members, extend empathy, and cultivate an environment that celebrates their individuality in the present (Dos Santos, 2019). I noticed the groups' cohesions, expansion and sense of feeling comfortable as they experienced the process of musicking together in this thick musical description from the seventh session:

"The therapist invites any participant to offer a beat in the space and the rest of the group would improvise with them. Participants M, T, and N take hold of the djembe drums, and participant A takes the claves. The therapist takes a pair of maracas. T starts excitedly on the largest djembe drum and plays a deep, slow rhythm. M and N add syncopated beats and the therapist and participant A join in. The group synchronises and the leader, T then increases the volume and quickens. The group members show excitement on their faces and a strong sense of harmony and group musicking grows. T then suddenly changes the beat and brings the music to a stop and the group members laugh".

5.3 Music therapy holds a reflective space for boys to explore identity

I was particularly eager to learn about how the boys perceive their journey into manhood. I asked various questions, such as whether they believe they should be able to express their emotions, who they envision themselves becoming, and where they currently stand in this transition from boyhood to manhood. I discovered that the group music therapy process encouraged them to contemplate questions about who they are and who they are becoming. Music therapy offered a space for self-reflection, enabling boys to reflect on their current situation and the insights they are gaining for personal growth.

5.3.1 Gaining Insight

Engaging in group music therapy processes, like playing instruments, singing, songwriting, listening to music, dancing, and engaging in group discussions, allowed the boys to actively gain insights into their own thoughts, emotions, and perspectives (Eyre, 2007). As we participated in musical activities together, they became more aware of each other, broadening their perception and intuition. The freedom within the space empowered them to feel comfortable sharing the insights we discovered throughout the process. The small group size was beneficial as it allowed us to deeply engage and connect. Schermer (2013) describes how in narrative therapy, individuals construct meaning by shaping their experiences and self-identity through storytelling. Narrative therapy was a useful approach as I could offer the boys

space to think deeply about their views and perspectives on masculinity and emotional expression. This offered them with the opportunity to reflect, introspect, and evolve their stories throughout our ongoing session. The boys admitted that they hadn't actively thought about their identities as men or explored masculinity before. Music therapy played a crucial role as it gave the boys a fresh perspective through music, fostering an environment where they could openly share. I also prompted them to deeply consider questions about masculinity and their journey into manhood. The process helped them better understand themselves and reflect on their own roles during the transition from boyhood to manhood. Ultimately, it allowed them to contemplate their views and experiences of expressing emotions (Eyre, 2007).

5.3.2 Reflecting on emotional experiences

During adolescence, grappling with emotions and their processing can often appear overwhelming for young boys. Adolescent boys tend to avoid expressing their emotions due to apprehensions about familial and peer perceptions, fearing potential labels of weakness or a lack of masculinity (Langa, 2016). In my study, participants spoke about their challenges in expressing emotions, perceiving it as preferable to either avoid expression altogether or only with certain individuals. One participant spoke about feeling more comfortable to express his emotions with his mother compared to his father, despite having a positive relationship with the latter. Furthermore, when discussing the permissibility and utility of expressing emotions, another participant suggested that while boys should express emotions, it should be limited to people that he trusts, to prevent misuse of their emotional vulnerability. Narrative music therapy, focusing on individuals' or groups' engagement in musicking to convey stories, underscores the link between music and storytelling (Eyre, 2007).

“MT: Mmmm okay. How did you guys experience doing this? Picturing a future self? Even sharing with us all as a group?

A: It was pretty nice, uhmmm, what you call it... I felt really cool drawing, this was a fun period of time because we get to do something we like, cause it's beneficial, instead of being forced to do stuff we don't like doing, like school. This made me think.

MT: Mmmm, some other thoughts?

M: Mmmm, I enjoyed it, not something I'm used to. It felt like a fun way

As Eyre (2007) explained, both music and narratives share the goal of expressing emotions, thoughts, and meanings. Through our group music therapy sessions, participants were afforded an environment to contemplate and delve into their thoughts regarding emotional expression, exploring their ideas and experiences.

5.3.3 Music therapy offers room to explore/reflect on one's current position and growth in boyhood/manhood journey

In my literature review, I refer to McFerran (2019) whose view is that that music therapists can create a safe space for adolescents to express intense emotions through shared music activities. For the participants, using music offers an alternative outlet for expressing themselves, which may not be as accessible in verbal therapy. Similarly, Dos Santos and Wagner (2018) emphasize that when music therapists use familiar music in therapy, it can create an open and familiar space, encouraging engagement and openness that verbal therapy might not provide. Kiselica et al. (2016) also note that boys and men tend to stay more engaged when participating in group activities. The boys in my study told me they were friends before joining the music therapy group. Being in a group allowed them to engage in shared activities and explore common themes, which I believe enhanced their friendship dynamics. In the music therapy sessions, I not only engaged the boys in musical activities but also encouraged them to express themselves through art.

Through guided drawing and poetry writing, the boys shared their thoughts on their evolving identities from boys to men. They discussed seeing themselves consciously as boys transitioning into men, a perspective they had not explored before our sessions. They expressed feelings of immaturity, the need for certain milestones in order to mature, and their desires to be providers, confident, emotionally expressive, and good leaders.

Jones (2015) suggests that the arts help individuals discover their unique voice and means of representation. During the fourth session, I asked the boys to write two poems: one reflecting on their childhood and the other envisioning their future as men. Through this activity, they shared stories of their joyful childhoods and the challenges they foresee as men, including their aspirations, emotions, and expectations. Below is an example of participant A's poems:

"MT: Mhmmm, maybe I can play some later? So A, would you like to read your poem for us?"

A: so 'Men'

T: You want us to play some music with you?

A: No, I would like silence, maybe afterwards if there's a way to make a sound with you, we can try. So,

Men,

long known for their muscles

They work hard to make their hustles

Expected to be heartless

To some that may be worthless

Supposedly having no weakness

But we will never be promised”

Okay so that’s masculinity

Okay so, Childhood:

I never lived in the ‘hood’

I always had food

My family was kind

The type that is hard to find

I always had a clue and always knew how to stay true

It’s a bit hard to explain but yea that’s me.”.

In the fifth session, I introduced a sonic sketch activity. It involved placing a large paper on the floor and giving the boys various art tools like colouring pencils, markers, and oil pastels. I asked them to think about their lives as teenage boys and reflect on their experience in therapy, especially their journey towards manhood based on the poems they had written in the last session. I played short song snippets while they engaged in the activity. I intentionally chose music that was diverse, including genres the participants had mentioned as their favourites. My goal in selecting this music was to evoke feelings of familiarity, spontaneity, thoughtfulness, and a sense of freshness for them. They expressed these thoughts through

art on the paper, moving around as the music changed. Finally, I asked them to step back and point out the images and colours that meant something to them within the paper frames I had prepared. They expressed their journey through art, highlighting words like "strong," "kind," "moving," "alive," "creative," and "random." They described the activity as exciting, funny, and somewhat annoying, titling their collective piece "Yes, Grown".

“MT: Mhmmm and what does this [image] say to the boys who are becoming men, the Yes, the grown, creativity, maturity, simplicity, quick. What does it have to do with you guys as you’re becoming men?

M: So, we are all different, with different dreams and stuff. Yeah...like we’re unique!

N: We’re growing at different paces

M: Yeah and in different ways.

A: We are growing and knowing

T: Everyone has their own way of doing things, and it’s not nice to try to change that about them, it’s what makes them great.

MT: Mmmm... it’s good.

M: I like that we can’t put our picture into a specific style.

MT: Mhmmm”.

Ultimately, they found this process reflective of their lives- complex yet straightforward, creative yet simple. They realized their uniqueness and recognized their growth as individuals, each at their own pace and in their own way.

5.4 Music therapy offers a constructive relational space

Music therapy can effectively break down barriers (Dos Santos & Wagner, 2018; McFerran, 2019). Through group improvisation and musicking together, I was able to establish a warm and open connection with the participants. This enhanced the quality of our sessions and our relationship, creating an atmosphere where

participants felt free and comfortable to share their thoughts. Although the participants were friends and had an altercation during a session, they were determined to continue with the session. This demonstrated their resilience and highlighted the value of music therapy in fostering resilience and emphasising the importance of their group connection.

5.4.1 Following the music therapist's rhythm

In my review of the literature, I discussed Bruscia's (2014) view that Music Therapy aims to encourage self-awareness and introspection through therapeutic relationships. Music therapy, specifically, can help develop trusting relationships by offering hope and friendship (McFerran, 2010). Austin (2006) discovered that techniques like vocal psychotherapy, songwriting, and vocal improvisation in music therapy enable people to express themselves in ways that might be challenging through verbal therapy. As I engaged the participants in music-making experiences, I built a warm relationship with them. During the music therapy sessions, the participants stayed involved and curious about our activities. They were interested in various instruments and enjoyed exploring the sounds they could create. In our drumming sessions, they admired my drumming skills and often wanted to follow my rhythm. Initially, they felt shy and uncertain about improvising, but this changed as I encouraged them to explore different rhythms, listen to one another, sense changes in tempo and volume, and adapt accordingly.

“MT: Okay, anyone else want to share how they were feeling when?”

M: At the same time, I felt so engaged when it got faster, I felt part of it, I could hear so many different sounds and my own, but all at once, together.

MT: Mmmm, and N, T?

T: Okay, hahaha, (*group starts to laugh with T*) I felt a sense of competition, I wanted to catch up with you [the MT] and then go faster than you (*Participants start whispering to each other*)

MT: Let's listen to T

T: Yea, I felt like competing, yea

MT: Okay and N?

N: I felt so energetic, it had such a nice beat to it and I felt like I could keep up with it.

MT: Okay, so A do you want to start now?

A: No, I think it can be someone else's turn (chuckles embarrassingly)

T: Can I start?

MT: Yea”

This approach helped them become more aware of themselves and each other, allowing them to freely express their thoughts, particularly regarding views on masculinity and emotional expression.

5.4.2 Resilience to push through when there is conflict in sessions

As discussed in the methodology section, I required participants to be boys facing disciplinary action at the school. Although this fact was acknowledged, it wasn't the primary focus during our sessions. Details about their misconduct were shared by the LO HOD. Scrine (2021) discusses that music therapy practice emphasises social action in group therapy, moving away from individualised approaches. Kiselica et al. (2016) highlight that boys build close friendships and bonds through shared activities. My study was significant as it involved four boys simultaneously undergoing disciplinary measures, shifting their focus towards discussions about masculinity and emotions using an accessible medium. My goal was not to regulate the participants' emotions; Scrine (2021) supports this approach. It was crucial to empower the participants to consider power dynamics and address their vulnerabilities.

In preparation for session six, I asked the boys to create a superhero-themed story using prompts to help them develop their super-hero characters. Metaphors as a framework can help us tell stories and give us new perspective on ourselves (Jones, 2015). This tool engages adolescents by being playful, creative, relatable, and offered me insights into their identities. During this session, I invited them to share their character stories, fostering humour, laughter, and curiosity, until an altercation occurred between two of the boys. One of the boys, angered by a prank, wanted to physically harm the other, at which point I had to intervene. After some space was given, I facilitated a discussion on validation and shared experiences when they felt invalidated. The hurt boy didn't engage initially, and when I suggested closing the session, he said "No, I want us to carry on.", which demonstrated resilience.

Kiselica (2016) discusses how boys and men consider others while expressing self-reliance, viewing resilience positively. Nicolas et al. (2008) suggest that facing challenges fosters resilience and a positive self-view in adolescents. Despite the conflict, one boy's determination to continue the session demonstrated resilience. Rickson and Watkins (2003) argue that boys labelled as "aggressive" might not display disruptive behaviour during sessions due to the safe, comfortable, and enjoyable atmosphere music therapy offers. Engaging in musical activities may lure them to the extent that it assists in regulating their emotions and controlling their behaviour. An example supporting this assertion is when the hurt boy, despite nearly engaging in a physical altercation with the other boy, expressed the desire to continue with the session. Cobbett (2009) suggests that music therapy provides a safe outlet for processing difficult

experiences without verbal intrusion. Following this, another boy proposed considering another activity or playing music as a group in a way that the hurt boy would enjoy. This initiative showed active validation, sparking a sense of hope within me. Ansdell (2016) emphasises that even when we experience uncertainties, the future can evolve positively through collaboration with others. As I reflected on the altercation and resolution, it made me contemplate not just the boys' immediate resilience but also their potential resilience in future challenges, showcasing their character. Expressing empathy appropriately functions as a form of communication, leading to social rewards that can enhance one's self-esteem (Hawkins & Farrant, 2022). We resumed the superhero theme, and all the boys moved past the difficult moment, engaging in laughter once more. Ansdell (2016) highlights that hope becomes essential in times of threat, countering despair as a general attitude.

5.5 Music therapy offers boys a play space for engaging in emotional expression and exploration

Adolescent boys often change how they act when they are around adults, especially when they have experienced these adults as always being critical and closed off to them (Cobbett, 2009). Music therapy provides a place where participants can freely share their interests, curiosities and perceptions without fear of judgement. In this safe environment, boys were able to express their emotions, whether crying, laughing or playing, through improvisation, movement, art and developing a therapeutic connection. The space offered them a safe environment to explore the questions they may have had as they navigated their transition from boyhood to manhood.

5.5.1 Confusion and Guardedness

In the early stages of the process, when I encouraged the boys to improvise, especially on djembe drums, they showed confusion and caution. I pondered over their perceptions of the unusualness and unfamiliarity of playing musical instruments and making music together. In my prior clinical work as a music therapy student, clients often hesitated to play instruments due to not knowing how to, fear of being judged for their musical ability, and feeling exposed and vulnerable – much like these boys. It was crucial for me to stay receptive and supportive to guide them through this new experience. Maintaining openness allows clients to explore spontaneity, ignite their imagination, and find chances to “recreate” and “re-image” their life (Pavlicevic, 2002, p.112). Cobbett (2009) suggests that adolescents can recognise genuineness in therapists, fostering trust that encourages them to take risks in exploring difficult experiences and contemplate new behaviour.

5.5.2 Power and Strength

I encouraged the four boys to contemplate their feelings and thoughts upon entering the music therapy space, urging them to reflect on their daily experiences as boys and their journey within music therapy. This encouraged them to discuss their perceptions of themselves and other men openly. They pondered over the meanings of power and strength (Cobbett, 2009). Kiselica et al. (2016) highlight that certain male-dominant characteristics are learned within social institutions like schools and homes. In Glasgow, Cassidy et al. (2017) conducted a study to explore the use of drama therapy techniques with drama therapists and their clients to create safe spaces and enable clients to reflect, especially when verbal communication was challenging. Through grounded theory analysis, they discovered that by using drama therapy techniques, new forms of self-expression can be introduced. Had I not conducted a music therapy session and simply posed the same questions to the boys, they might have struggled to respond or offer the detailed answers they did. Engaging in music-making, playful activities, and having the freedom to express themselves appeared to help them open up and become more expressive. Music therapy provided a platform for the boys to actively observe how power and strength are imposed on boys and men. It allowed them to consider who possesses power and strength among men, whether they identified with these attributes, and whether they could bring about change. Participant T's poem on men and masculinity mirrored these reflections:

“What is masculinity?

The ability to show leadership

Or the strengths and ability to blink

Men are destroyers of what truly matter

Emotions

True Emotion

Not just some fake face men put on

We are meant to be the provider

Emotionless robots society has put and built into a programme

Masculinity, or is it a front of endless pain and suffering in this rogue and corrupt world?

Suicide, pain and all of this for what?

To stereotype a gender of true magnificence, true beauty.”

Using drama and storytelling together can expand the therapeutic environment to explore different stories, self-perceptions, and the potential for change (Butler et al., 2013). Beyond focusing on addressing research inquiries, incorporating play and drama allowed me to gain a clearer and deeper understanding of the four boys. They shared that the activity was enjoyable and provided a distinct experience compared to performing poems in a typical classroom setting.

5.5.3 Exploring the idea that boys/men should not cry

Pearson (2023) observed that many cultures around the world emphasise traditional notions of masculinity, valuing emotional and physical strength, toughness, and power. When I opened up a discussion about whether boys should express their feelings, the participants shared experiences reflecting societal expectations that discourage boys and men from displaying negative emotions like sadness through crying, as this might be perceived as signs of weakness. Instead, they mentioned that expressions of anger or seriousness were seen as indicators of strength and power. The boys contemplated these ideas, acknowledging the necessity of emotional expression but also expressing concerns about societal norms. Participant A identified himself as an emotional person, aware that others might judge him for this. Participant T believed that norms regarding emotional expression should change, advocating for open expression for boys and men. In contrast, Participant M felt that while expression was important, vulnerability should be reserved for trusted individuals. Kiselica et.al. (2016) discovered through their studies using the GSRP framework that certain qualities like self-awareness, authenticity, emotional connectivity, and the ability to admit mistakes were seen as positive traits of masculinity. Here is an excerpt from my discussion with the boys about their thoughts on men expressing emotions and their responses:

“MT: If you guys think of men in your lives; your dads, brothers, grandads, cousins, have you experienced them as expressing emotions in front of you?

Group: Yes, kind of.

T: I've never seen my dad cry.....other than being happy. I don't know, like I'm the oldest kid at home, I have two younger sisters. My dad always says me and him are the men of the home, so we need to take care of my mom and my sisters. Sometimes I feel a bit weird cause I don't really feel like a man yet and stuff. But I do also wanna be like my dad. Sometimes I feel that responsibility 'cause I am the oldest and my sisters are like a few years younger than me.

N: Especially grandparents, maybe also because we don't see them that much.

M: I spend a lot of time with my dad, but we don't talk a lot about feelings. It's kind of awkward with him. Most of the time, he's serious, so maybe in a way, I kind of also feel weird about crying and stuff. My brother told me that like if stuff feels hard, it's better to hold it in cause it's weird when guys cry. And other people can kind of see you as weak and stuff."

Although the boys had differing views, the space offered by music therapy allowed them to share their thoughts in a secure environment. This prompted them to contemplate their own perspectives on the matter and how they relate to societal norms

5.5.4 Feeling good (Comfort)

As I aimed to stay curious and open-minded, I inquired about the music genres that interested the participants and their reasons for liking them. Sharing personal interests can be empowering (Cobbett, 2009) and can help break down barriers in adolescents (McFerran, 2010). Throughout the sessions, none of the boys cried, except for the one who was hurt during the altercation that happened in session six, as described earlier. Some discussions brought up challenging emotions, and I noticed how the safe environment allowed the boys to express their feelings and thoughts openly.

5.6 Music therapy can facilitate exploration of societal norms of masculinity

As part of my interest in the participants' views, experiences and thoughts about masculinity, I also wanted to understand who and what they believe embodies the qualities of a real man. The participants expressed their views on how they perceive a real man as someone who provides, is strong, confident, wise, serious, tall and mature. Their stories revealed that they recognise the transition from boyhood to manhood as an ongoing process, and they currently view themselves as being in the middle of that transition. They also mentioned feeling that they still have some childish and immature qualities. Their narratives showed that while they have their own aspirations for the type of men they want to become, stereotypes and societal norms, and even their own fathers, influence their understanding of masculinity and manhood.

5.6.1 Exploring the notion that a man is a provider

In their research, Schermer (2013) and Pearson (2023) note that, across various cultures, there's a widespread belief that a true man is someone capable of providing for others. During the sessions, I aimed to understand the boys' perspectives and experiences regarding masculinity. A notable recurring theme was the idea of being a provider. All the boys mentioned that being a provider symbolises what it means to be a man, echoing the findings of Schermer and Pearson. One of the boys shared that as the eldest in his family, he felt pressure from his father to take on the responsibility of providing for the household and the females in the family. He expressed feeling obliged to take on this role even though he might not want to. Another boy emphasised the importance of financial stability for men to support their future families. At the start of session three, I asked the boys to consider how the music therapy space might influence the way they act outside and how they express themselves in their daily lives. One of the participants mentioned feeling concerned about paying taxes and ensuring he can support his family in the future:

“MT: But you don’t work. Why are you thinking of taxes if you don’t work yet?”

T: We will when we are older. Sometimes it’s better to worry now, than when you’re older. I can be more prepared

MT: Okay, but you can’t change that, right? You can’t even go to the South African Tax Revenue Services and say “I’m not paying my taxes this month” – they will come after you. And it happens involuntarily, because when you get paid at work, they immediately take the money out for taxes, there’s no way around it, so I wouldn’t stress too much about this now.

A: See, that’s why being an adult is so stressful.

T: Yea, like how will I be a provider?”

I observed that being a provider was a significant symbol and key aspect in defining manhood and masculinity for the boys. It is also currently a source of worry for the boys.

5.6.2 Exploring the notion that a man has strength

Engaging in risky behaviours, showing aggression, avoiding feminine traits, and adopting a "macho" attitude signal strength in men (Kiselica, 2016; Pearson, 2023; Schermer, 2013). In our conversations, the boys shared similar views while also expressing some doubts. I learned that these boys have strong connections with their fathers and other male figures, but rarely express emotions. They perceive that showing emotions, particularly crying, is seen as a sign of weakness, unlike maintaining a serious demeanour, which is associated with strength. Our discussions encouraged them to rethink these societal norms and consider other ways to exhibit power. One of the boys emphasised that emotions and expressing them should be seen as normal because they're a natural part of being human:

“A: How would we be able to mourn someone’s death? How can you be human if you always have the same expression, or feelings all the time? And we wouldn’t know what’s normal if we don’t feel.”

5.6.3 Exploring the notion that a man is assertive

Aligned with their perspectives on strength, the boys further described a genuine man as someone who is assertive, a leader who makes decisions and directs his actions and performance of manhood. The boys pointed out that the process of becoming a man involves acquiring wisdom and assertiveness, as seen in their responses below:

“A: Are you trying to say someone that’s like honoured and respectable?”

T: (Nods head)

MT: And is there something about T now, that’s similar to the T you’re becoming?”

T: Yes, but also not, maybe...when I get older, those parts will show a lot more

MT: Mhmmm, M?”

M: Mmmm, I didn’t really have anything in mind. I always thought that, uhmmm, I would gain assertiveness and wisdom, deeper understanding about myself as I go along with life, but so far... I never really get to worry about what that is”.

5.6.4 Exploring the notion that a man is popular

As the boys go through adolescence, they experience various changes in their behaviour and thinking. Some aspects were especially crucial for the boys, such as their friendships, social circles, clothing choices, and self-image (as is found in Pearson, 2023; Shermer, 2013). Among these characteristics, being popular held substantial importance to these four boys. According to them, a popular man is someone who not only appears attractive but is also sought after in social settings and holds an appealing charisma, particularly with women.

5.6.5 Exploring the notion that a man is thoughtful

The boys discussed how socialisation deeply influences their actions and mannerisms, affecting how they shape masculinity and their ability to express emotions. One participant pointed out that observing others significantly influences his thoughts; that is if boys and men witness a large number of other males

behaving in a particular manner, they typically would not question that behaviour. It seems normal and, consequently, is considered appropriate:

“MT: Do you feel like this affects your ability to express your emotions?”

A: No

T: Not really, I guess I don’t think about it that much. I’m thinking about it more now, I guess because you’re asking us to as we go.

M: Not me, but overall if men act one way, we develop and try to act the same way.”

Portraying their fathers as "serious" appeared to signify their fathers' constant contemplation of their actions and consideration for others. While I did not specifically inquire about this, I would be interested to know if they have witnessed their fathers in more laid-back moments. The boys emphasised that manhood is associated with wisdom. They expressed feeling immature themselves and believed that as they grew older, they would acquire more wisdom (which also relates to the subtheme that follows). Participant M expressed the idea that life's challenges could potentially toughen him up, contributing to his wisdom:

“MT: Aha. Is there anything that life is gonna do to you, to help you become that man?”

M: Uhm, maybe. It might toughen me up, teach me new things and make me wiser.”

5.6.6 Exploring the notion that a man can be childish or manly

In our fifth session, I initiated a discussion about the differences between childishness and manliness. I asked the boys to explain and outline the characteristics of these two extremes. They depicted childishness as immaturity, preferring foods associated with younger kids, engaging in jokes, pranks, and sometimes throwing tantrums. As our conversation continued, they moved away from viewing themselves as childish and started sharing their aspirations for their future manhood. For them, manliness involved moving beyond certain behaviours, aiming to be sociable and likeable to many.

5.6.7 Exploring the notion that becoming a man is a process

The boys emphasised that becoming a man involves several stages and steps; it is a gradual process. Based on their thoughts, manhood may begin at various ages (ranging between 16 and 25 years old), which they could not reach a consensus on. They concurred that this transformation occurs at different paces and

takes on diverse forms. They also highlighted that rite of passage, initiations, and reaching certain milestones are crucial prerequisites for a boy to genuinely consider himself a man.

“M: So, we are all different, with different dreams and stuff. Yeah...like we’re unique!

N: We’re growing at different paces

M: Yeah and in different ways.

A: We are growing and knowing

T: Everyone has their own way of doing things, and it’s not nice to try to change that about them, it’s what makes them great.

MT: Mmmm... it’s good.”.

5.6.8 Exploring the notion that men are tall and strong

Finally, the boys' understanding of masculinity did not only revolve around their emotional and mental attributes but also extended to physical appearance. They indicated that aspects such as growing facial hair, being tall, having a deep voice, and possessing a well-toned physique are elements that also shape their perception of manliness and masculinity.

“MT: okay, that’s cool. And M, do you want to say how Gash relates to M? A likeness or unlikeness to M

M: So basically, Gash is like a super edgy cool guy who is buff and tall. He has a full beard and a deep voice. He’s very cool like me. He’s good with people and great with women.”.

5.7 Music therapy can facilitate exploration of alternate narratives of manhood

The boys discussed the influence of societal norms on how men are expected to behave and develop. However, during the group music therapy process, I observed that the participants started sharing stories and narratives about their aspirations to break away from these stereotypes. They expressed uncertainty about their future selves and who they are becoming, but they also spoke about their desire to become an ideal man according to their own standards. They emphasised the value of learning as they grow, which

is helping shape their own journey. A key point was their shared desire to be unique and valued for their individuality. It appeared significant that they could explore alternative ways of being in this space, especially considering they were often labelled as troublesome or mischievous at their school. Music therapy allowed them to share experiences openly and confidently. At the start of the fifth session, I invited each participant to share a symbol that best represents them. Participant M brought his school bag and shared how it was “very fine” and represents his different facets and his uniqueness:

“M: this is my school bag. So my symbol represents me, it looks very fine, and it’s filled with knowledge. It has so much variety, yea... like I’m not a neat person and it shows...but I am very different, I have a lot of books, other people may have other books. I am different from other people and I’m unique.”.

5.7.1 Who I want to become

Resource-oriented music therapy involves nurturing strengths and potentials, aiming to help individuals express emotions, sustain interest, and achieve group goals (Kwok, 2019). During sessions, I encouraged the boys to share and listen to each other's music, whether through improvisation or sharing their favourite songs played loudly on a Bluetooth speaker. This allowed the boys to see the therapy space as their own, enabling them to be active participants and share vulnerabilities. According to Kwok, music creates a safe and relaxing environment, fostering group support and attentive listening. Through our sessions, the boys began envisioning their future selves as "cool," "extroverted," "honoured," "respectable," yet "caring," "joyful," and "innocent." During reflections, they challenged societal norms on male emotional expression, seeing feeling and expressing emotions as a natural part of being human. One participant expressed a desire to be emotionally open in front of his children, which signalled a level of maturity and a shift in mindset potentially influenced by our music therapy group experience.

5.7.2 Values being filled with knowledge

Music therapy was not only a fun space for the boys, but also a place where they felt like they were learning. Throughout the process, they felt they were gaining insightful knowledge about themselves, contributing to their overall meaningful experience.

5.7.3 Boys value being unique

While we explored masculinity, it was interesting to witness the boys' sense of uniqueness within our discussions, which holds significant importance. Even within the group, I prioritized valuing and acknowledging the individuality of each member. Music therapists adopt a client-centred, humanistic approach where groups help build peer relationships built on trust, respect, and appreciation for each member's difference and uniqueness (Rickson & Watkins, 2003). Engaging adolescents at their level enables music therapists to facilitate conversations about their personal experience (Cobbett, 2009). Although I would plan activities ahead of sessions, I encouraged the boys to actively participate by suggesting how they wanted the session to flow. Drumming became an activity they enjoyed, and I also encouraged them to share their favourite songs for us to sing or dance along to. For improvisation activities, I would present them with a variety of instruments and I empowered them to select instruments and initiate songs, and I actively engaged as a participant rather than being the leader or director. This approach enhances self-awareness and empathy among clients and encourages more prosocial behaviour, particularly among adolescents who are labelled as "aggressive" (Rickson & Watkins, 2003).

5.7.4 Unclear of the man I'm becoming/ want to be

The boys sharing their narratives in therapy will generate stories as diverse as they are (Shermer, 2013). Group music therapy was beneficial as we could discuss the definitions of men and masculinity while allowing them room for change, and even uncertainties about their own identities as men. This approach facilitated the telling and sharing of stories and these narratives were flexible and subject to change. According to Shermer (2013), the music therapy space allows for exploration without definitive right or wrong answers, which provided a opportunity for the boys to think deeply about these themes. After a drawing activity, participant A shared his drawing with the group, sharing the story about these uncertainties:

"A: So, this is a business man I didn't draw the face because I don't know exactly what I want to be, I don't know exactly who I want to be, I feel like if I do, I could disappoint myself if I don't become that man. I might make some bad decisions. Let's say if I don't want to be an architect for example when I grow up, maybe I might want to be an artist like T, but I am showing some sense of wealth....

MT: Mmmm do you wanna share your image? You can hold it up for us to see (shows the group)
Mmmm.

A: I put question marks, instead of a face."

5.8 Music therapy can facilitate space to explore hopes for the future

As a Black South African woman, I have witnessed the struggles Black men face in our country, given our challenging history. Men of colour in South Africa have historically limited opportunities, especially when it comes to their careers and the freedom to choose their own paths in life, which is fortunately changing in South Africa's democratic state. Having group music therapy sessions with young boys of colour was personally significant for me, as I became a music therapist, which was a dream I could not have imagined just a few years ago as a Black woman. One of the most heartwarming experiences during my time with these boys was hearing about their determination and strong desire to pursue their dreams. They shared stories about their hopes for the future, expressing a desire for a "satisfying, successful" career while also being good husbands and providers. This was truly inspiring to me, as it felt like they were challenging and transcending societal expectations of an ideal man and redefining what that means for them. I fondly remember as a participant said: "Here it feels cool to talk about men".

5.8.1 Dreams link to norms of manhood

During our conversations on men and society's expectations of men, some boys expressed uncertainty about the future, which they represented in their artwork. They also spoke about their aspirations to pursue traditionally male-dominated career paths and admired their fathers as role models. I observed the significant influence of socialisation, while also reflecting on my own uncertainty in determining what constitutes the "right" perspective on masculinity.

5.8.2 Dreams link to alternate manhood

However, I felt inspired when the boys shared their positive self-perceptions, expressing their desire to achieve different aspirations: "become a basketball player, successful and renowned artists, and a wealthy realtor". The boys aim to become prosperous and content individuals in their chosen professions who will be able to support their future families. Jones (2015) suggested that dreams serve as a connection between the past and the future. Jones continues to explain that expression, communication, dialogue, and access to therapeutic space, relationships, and artistic processes are linked to a concept similar to active dreaming. As participant N said: "I can create anything from my imagination". This and similar narratives seemed like a fresh start for a nation with a complex history. I reflected that perhaps the lingering negative impact of the past may be diminishing due to the opportunities available to young people and their ambitious goals. Music therapy functioned as a platform for boys to express themselves and share their personal stories, particularly through rap (Uhlir et al., 2018).

In our final session, the boys suggested ending our process with a rap improvisation. Travis (2013, p. 154) highlights that young people have “complex” views about music's influence, especially in rap music, which they interpret as both empowering and carrying some risk. Through activities like rapping, songwriting, and analysing lyrics in Hip-hop, adolescents experience a form of emotional “catharsis” by creating their narratives into songs, emphasising a sense of community pride. Travis emphasizes that Hip-hop enables empowerment by fostering self-esteem, resilience, growth, and change in adolescents (p. 162). The music the boys played had a bittersweet quality, infused with a psychedelic Hip Hop flare. The lyrics told a story about the boys and the experience they had—*a group of friends navigating a world where they feel somewhat misunderstood. Initially uncertain about what music therapy was about, or would be like, they ended up immensely enjoying the experience. Not sure of their identities, their current situation, or their future paths, they were nevertheless ready to embrace the unknown and see what awaits them on the other side:*

“N: Mmmm, yeah.....mmmm yeah.....mmmm yeah (heavy sigh)

T: Okay!

N: All the little children, yea we keep growing

And I am, missing again

Ahhhhh (heavy sigh)

(Music intensifies)

Sobering from midnight cocaine, mmmm

Silly little kids lets, play with our hair mhm....mmmm

C’mon T, add a little bit of that yeah!

Every time!

Just stand up on your feet, yeah! Mhm

T: Let’s go! Let’s go!

N: Mhm mmmm yeah

T: Let’s go! Let’s go!

(Music intensifies further, T adds riffs on the keyboard, M and A play soprano notes with high-speed and excitement)

N: *When you trying something, just stomp on your feet like a man!*

If you sing a little bit,

I'll give you some more heat, yeah!

(N looks at the other participants, and A and M laugh)

N: *C'mon, we're growing into men*

We need your words

If you don't

You'll become a little birds

Yeah, mhm mmmm

T: *Okay!*

Here's my verse

I don't know what to say

Everything is broken

I don't know

So I'll pass it back to N

N: *Mmmm*

(MT hums with N)

Okay, today was a little bit psycho

Cause I don't really know where I might go

Or how I'll grow.

Let's hear from M, mhm mmmm

(M shakes his head. The music intensifies, changes in key slightly with some light sounds. The MT adds fast-paced riffs on the drum)

Can anyone out there help?

Just sing along and I'll help you shout

Mhm mmm yeah!

T: *We can do this*

We can do this

A: *Here I am*

A little boring

A little funny

I'm still a boy

Maybe I'll be a funny man.

N: *I still want to play games when I grow up*

But everyone wants me to be serious

Mhm mmmm yeah!

(Group starts to laugh and the music slows down gradually)

Playing here has really helped

Cause the world has high expectations, yeah! Mhm mmmm".

(Music slows down more and MT ends with a fast-paced riff. The group laughs together).

Chapter 6

Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will provide a summary of the main findings of the study. Thereafter, I will discuss the study's limitations, and suggest recommendations for future research. Finally, I will end the chapter with concluding thoughts.

6.2 Summary of Findings

Participants engaged in storytelling, dance, improvisation, drumming, drawing, and creative writing, sharing their narratives. Music therapy provided a safe, supportive environment for these boys to freely express emotions, embrace creativity, experience relief from stress and anxiety, share humour, and show care and empathy for each other. This space encouraged mutual validation, fostering exploration and reciprocity. I witnessed them having fun while exploring introspection in activities they would not typically engage in. The newness of music therapy invited openness and exploration, strengthening their bond as friends.

During therapy, the boys delved into various aspects of masculinity, discussing their identities, the transition from immaturity to maturity, and their journey as becoming men. They openly shared their perspectives in a space that they experienced as enjoyable and comfortable. What struck me the most was their recognition of societal norms dictating masculinity—appearance, emotional expression, being a strong provider—yet challenging these views, suggesting alternative ways to view masculinity. They advocated for emotional expression, individual uniqueness, and ambitious dreams, countering traditional norms.

Through the therapeutic process and shared musical experiences, the boys contemplated traditional and alternative ideas about masculinity. Despite facing disciplinary actions simultaneously, their friendship dynamics evolved during the therapy, showcasing resilience amid conflicts. Music therapy appeared to empower them, enabling open discussions about emotions and challenging societal perceptions about emotional expression in males. Arts-based techniques assisted them in reflecting on and navigating the complexities of their transition from boyhood into manhood.

As a Black South African woman, observing the determination of young boys of colour in pursuing their dreams deeply moved and inspired me. Their ambitions challenged societal expectations, reshaping the definition of success beyond the historical constraints placed on men of colour, thereby redefining the idea of an ideal man. At the end of the process, participants felt uncertain about the men they might become as the future is unknown. However, they left the process with a sense of self-discovery, gaining insight into emotional expression and acknowledging that the music therapy process prompted them to deeply reflect on and express their beliefs and aspirations for their journey into manhood and their future.

6.3 Limitations

The study's small sample size, comprising only four boys, means that the findings cannot be broadly applied to all adolescent boys. While the small group size allowed for in-depth discussions, it's also a limitation because a larger sample could offer more extensive data on this subject. Another limitation was the limited demographic representation, including only three Black boys and one Mixed-race boy. The absence of participants from other racial backgrounds might impact both the participants' experiences and the study's findings, potentially skewing the results.

There was no follow-up meeting with the school to verify the impact of the process. Conducting such a meeting could have provided insights into the participants' experiences shortly after the study concluded. The fact that the participants were friends might have affected the group dynamic and the development of therapeutic relationships. If they were only peers without previous friendships, the atmosphere within the group might have been different. Acting in the dual role of therapist and researcher needed to be carefully managed. It is possible that my role as a relatable and familiar face, being a Black woman like their mothers, influenced their willingness to be emotionally open during therapy. This was both a strength and limitation: my relatable and familiar face may have allowed the boys to feel at ease and comfortable to engage in therapeutic processes with me. On the other hand, the results may have been different if a male therapist or therapist of a different demographic population was involved.

6.4 Recommendations for future research

Masculinity and emotional expression in boys and men are complex themes critical for studies in psychology and humanities, and in music therapy in particular. I would recommend having a larger group of participants in future music therapy studies on this topic studies to include more diverse perspectives.

Also, increasing the number of sessions with participants would allow for more in-depth discussions and richer data. If similar studies would be conducted, it would be beneficial to conduct follow-up meetings the school and explore other methods to understand how participants' experiences changed outside of the music therapy environment. Considering implementing a similar process as part of an after-school program to help adolescents with emotional and behavioural issues could be valuable. Finally, collaborative work with other music or art therapists in a similar study might yield interesting results and promote the development of programs focusing on boys, men, and positive masculinity.

6.5 Conclusion

Throughout the music therapy process, boys engaged in various creative activities like dance, drumming, and creative writing, creating a space for free expression, empathy, and exploration. They navigated masculinity, identity, maturity, and emotional expression, facing conflicts yet demonstrating resilience. This group music therapy process empowered them to discuss emotions comfortably and offered them a way to navigate the complexities that surround their process as becoming men. The experience was both refreshing and enlightening, encouraging exploration and introspection among the group of friends. Their journey deeply inspired me, as an aspiring music therapist also on my own journey of becoming.

In closing, I recall the boys' request for a song by Tyler, the Creator at the end of our sessions. As they left the therapeutic room, this hip-hop track became a significant part of their experience.

See you Again (Song by Tyler the Creator, featuring Kali Uchis)

Okay, okay, okay, okay

Okay, okay, oh

You live in my dream state

Relocate my fantasy

I stay in reality

You live in my dream state

Any time I count sheep

That's the only time we make up, make up

You exist behind my eyelids, my eyelids

Now I don't wanna wake up

20-20, 20-20 vision

Cupid hit me, Cupid hit me with precision

I wonder if you look both ways

When you cross my mind (yeah), I said, I said

I'm sick of, sick of, sick of chasing

You're the one that's always running through my daydream, I can only see your face when I close my eyes

Can I get a kiss?

And can make it last forever?

I said I'm 'bout to go to war

And I don't know if I'ma see you again

Can I get a kiss? (Can I)

And can make it last forever?

I said I'm 'bout to go to war

And I don't know if I'ma see you again

(Uh, switch it up)

I said, okay, okay, okay, okidokie, my infatuation

Is translation' to another form of what you call it? (Love)

Oh yeah, oh yeah, oh yeah, I ain't met you

I've been looking, stick here waiting for I

Stop the chasing, like an alcoholic

You don't understand me, what the [-]do you mean?

It's them rose tinted cheeks, yeah it's them dirt-coloured eyes

Sugars honey iced tea, bumblebee on the scene

Yeah I'd give up my backers to have a piece of your pie

Yugh!

20-20, 20-20 vision

Cupid hit me, Cupid hit me with precision

I wonder if you look both ways

When you cross my mind (yeah), I said, I said

I'm sick of, sick of, sick of chasing

You're the one that's always running through my daydream, I can only see your face when I close my eyes (So)

Can I get a kiss?

And can make it last forever?

I said I'm 'bout to go to war

And I don't know if I'ma see you again

Can I get a kiss? (Can I)

And can make it last forever?

I said I'm 'bout to go to war ('Bout to)

And I don't know if I'ma see you again

Okay, okay, okay, okay, okay, okay, okay, oh (La, la, la, la, la, la, la, la)

Okay, okay, okay, okay, okay, okay, okay, oh (La, la, la, la, la, la, la, la)

Okay, okay, okay, okay, okay, okay, okay, oh (La, la, la, la, la, la, la, la)

Okay, okay, okay, okay, okay, okay, okay, oh (La, la, la, la, la, la, la, la)

One more time?

The song reflects the phase these participants were experiencing as adolescent boys, where their lived experiences were constantly changing and sometimes confusing, yet also exciting. Their animated joy while rapping and singing along with the song was symbolic. It illustrated how music, and narrative group music therapy, provided them with a freeing, enjoyable, and meaningful space to explore their everchanging identities as adolescent boys. Their engagement with the song was a testament to how music therapy empowered their journey towards self-discovery.

References

AMINEXT television programme. (2020). eTV (aired 3 April 2021). Maverick Resistance Production.

Aldridge, D. (2005). A story told from practice: The reflective inquirer in an ecology of ideas. *Case Study Designs in Music Therapy* (pp. 9-30). Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Ansdell, G. (2016). *How music helps in music therapy and everyday life*. Routledge.

Arifin, S. (2018). Ethical considerations in qualitative study. *International Journal of Care Scholars*, 1(2).

Austin, D. (2006). Songs of the self: Vocal psychotherapy for adults traumatized as children. In Carey, L. (Ed.), *Expressive and Creative Arts Methods for Trauma Survivors* (pp. 133 – 152.). Jessica Kingsley.

Bhana, D., & Chen, H. (2020). 'If you a bitch, we treat you like a bitch': South African teenage boys' constructions of heterosexual masculinity. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 23(10), 1273-1292.

Bruscia, K. (2014). *Defining music therapy* (3rd ed.). Barcelona Publishers.

Bruscia, K. E. (2005). Standards of integrity for qualitative music therapy research. In *Voices: A world forum for music therapy* 5(3). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15845/voices.v5i3.238>

Butina, M. (2015). A narrative approach to qualitative inquiry. *Clinical Laboratory Science*, 28(3), 190-196.

Butler, E., Bakker, T. M., & Viljoen, G. (2013). Poetic and therapeutic encounters in an adolescent drama group. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 43(1), 94-104.

Cassidy, S., Gumley, A., & Turnbull, S. (2017). Safety, play, enablement, and active involvement: Themes from a Grounded Theory study of practitioner and client experiences of change processes in Dramatherapy. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 55, 174-185.

Christensen, L., Burke Johnson, R., & Turner L. A. (Eds.) (2015). *Research methods, design, and analysis* (12th ed.). Pearson Education Limited.

Chong, H. J., & Kim, S. J. (2010). Education-oriented music therapy as an after-school program for students with emotional and behavioral problems. *The Arts in Psychotherapy, 37*(3), 190-196.

Cobbett, S. (2009). Including the excluded: Music therapy with adolescents with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. *British Journal of Music Therapy, 23*(2), 15-24.

Corey, G. (2014). Theory and practice of counselling and psychotherapy: South African edition. *United Kingdom: Cengage Learning*.

De Fina, A., & Georgakapoulou, A. (2015). *The Handbook of Narrative Analysis*. Wiley Blackwell.

Di Bianca, M., & Mahalik, J. R. (2022). A relational-cultural framework for promoting healthy masculinities. *American Psychologist, 77*(3), 321-332.

Dos Santos, A. (2022). *Empathy pathways: A view from music therapy*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Dos Santos, A. (2020). The usefulness of aggression as explored by becoming-teenagers in group music therapy. *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy, 29*(2), 150-173, DOI:10.1080/08098131.2019.1649712.

Dos Santos, A. (2019). Group music therapy with adolescents referred for aggression. In K. McFerran., P. Derrington., & S. Saarikallio. (Eds.). *Handbook of music, adolescents, and wellbeing* (pp. 15-23). Oxford University Press.

Dos Santos, A. (2018). Empathy and aggression in group music therapy with teenagers: A descriptive phenomenological study. *Music Therapy Perspectives, 37*(1), 2019, 14-27. American Music Therapy Association. DOI:10.1093/mtp/miy024.

Elliot, J. (2005). *Using narrative in social research, qualitative and quantitative approaches*. SAGE.

Esin, C. (2021). Narrative analysis approaches. In Frost N. (Ed.), *Qualitative research methods in psychology: Combining core approaches* (2nd Ed., pp. 92-118). McGraw-Hill Education (UK).

Eyre, L. (2007). The Marriage of Music and Narrative: Explorations in Art, Therapy, and Research. *Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy*, 7(3). <https://doi.org/10.15845/voices.v7i3.549>

Fleet, D., Burton, A., Reeves, A., & DasGupta, M. P. (2016). A case for taking the dual role of counsellor-researcher in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 13(4), 328-346.

Giaccardi, S., Ward, L., Seabrook, R., Manago, A., & Lippman, J. (2016). Media and modern manhood: testing associations between media consumption and young men's acceptance of traditional gender ideologies. *Sex Roles*, 75, 151-163. DOI: 10.1007/81119-016-0588-z

Giliomee, H. (2003). The making of the apartheid plan. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 29(2), 373-392, DOI: 10.1080/03057070306211.

Gqola, P. D. (2007). How the 'cult of femininity' and violent masculinities support endemic gender-based violence in contemporary South Africa. *African Identities*, 5(1), 111-124, DOI: [10.1080/14725840701253894](https://doi.org/10.1080/14725840701253894).

Hadley, S & Edwards, J. (2016). Narrative Inquiry. In K. Murphy & B. L. Wheeler (Eds.). *Music therapy research* (3rd ed., pp. 840-855). Barcelona Publishers.

Haen, C. (Ed.). (2011). *Engaging boys in treatment: Creative approaches to the therapy process* (Vol. 9). Taylor & Francis.

Hawkins, S., & Farrant, C. (2022). Influence of turn-taking in musical and spoken activities on empathy and self-esteem of socially vulnerable young teenagers. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 801574.

Hunter, M. (2007). The changing political economy of sex in South Africa: The significance of unemployment and inequalities to the scale of the AIDS pandemic. *Social Science & Medicine*, 64(3), 689–700. DOI: doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2006.09.015.

Jones, P. (2015). Trauma and dramatherapy: dreams, play and the social construction of culture. *South African Theatre Journal*, 28(1), 4-16.

Kasmaei, S. K., & Asghari, F. (2017). Comparative study of the effects of narrative therapy and play therapy by group approach on inhibiting impulsivity, reducing aggression and increasing interpersonal relations. *World Family Medicine Journal: Incorporating the Middle East Journal of Family Medicine*, 99(4215), 1-10.

Khoza, L. (2004). Adolescents' knowledge, beliefs and experiences regarding sexual practices. *Health SA Gesondheid*, 9(1), 34-41.

Khumalo, S., Mabaso, M., Makusha, T., & Taylor, M. (2021). Intersections between masculinities and sexual behaviors among young men at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *SAGE Open*, 11(3), 21582440211040114.

Kiselica, M. S., Benton-Wright, S., & Englar-Carlson, M. (2016). Accentuating positive masculinity: A new foundation for the psychology of boys, men, and masculinity. In Y. J. Wong & S. R. Wester (Eds.), *APA handbook of men and masculinities* (pp. 123–143). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/14594-006>

Kwok, S. Y. (2019). Integrating positive psychology and elements of music therapy to alleviate adolescent anxiety. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 29(6), 663-676.

Kruger, L., & Prinsloo, H. (2008). The appraisal and enhancement of resilience modalities in middle adolescents withing the school context. *South African Journal of Education*, 28(2), 241-260.

Langa, M. (2016). The value of using a psychodynamic theory in researching black masculinities of adolescent boys in Alexandra township, South Africa. *Men and Masculinities*, 19(3), 260–288. DOI: 10.1177/1097184x15586434.

Langa, M. (2010). Adolescent boys' talk about absent fathers. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 20(4), 519-526, DOI: 10.1080/14330237.2010.10820410.

Mathews, S., Jewkes, R., Abrahams, N. (2011). 'I had a hard life': Exploring childhood adversity in the shaping of masculinities among men who killed and intimate partner in South Africa. *The British Journal of Criminology*, 51(6), 960-977.

McFerran, K. S. (2020). Adolescents and music therapy: Contextualized recommendations for research and practice. *Music Therapy Perspectives*, 38(1), 80-88.

McFerran, K. (2019). Crystallizing this relationship between adolescents, music and emotions. In K. McFerran., P. Derrington., & S. Saarikallio. (Eds.), *Handbook of music, adolescents, and wellbeing* (pp. 4-13). Oxford University Press

McFerran, K. S. (2010). *Adolescents, music and music therapy: Methods and techniques for clinicians, educators and students*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Mhlauli, M., Salani, E., & Mokotedi, R. (2015). Understanding apartheid in South Africa through the racial contract. *International Journal of Asian Social Science*, 5(4), 203–209. DOI: doi.org/10.18488/journal.1/2015.5.4/1.4.203.209.

Nicolas, G., Helms, J. E., Jernigan, M. M., Sass, T., Skrzypek, A. & DeSilva, A. M. (2008). A conceptual framework for understanding the strengths of black youths. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 34(3), 261-280. DOI: 10.1177/0095798408316794.

Payne, Y. & Brown, T. (2010). The educational experience of street-life-orientated black boys: how black boys use street life as a site of resilience in high school. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 26(3), 316-338.

Pavlicevic, M. (2002). Fragile rhythms and uncertain listenings: Perspectives from music therapy with South African children. In J. P. Sutton, (Ed.), *Music, music therapy and trauma: International Perspectives* (pp. 97-118). London, UK and Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Pearson, R. (2023). Masculinity and emotionality in education: critical reflections on discourses of boys' behaviour and mental health. *Educational Review*, 75(6), 1101-1130.

Pitsoane, E. M., & Gasa, V. G. (2018). The role of father-son relationship in behavioural and emotional development of adolescent boys. *Gender and Behaviour*, 16(1), 10748-10757.

Pyke, A. (2022). “You mix up the thinking, and then you look at the journey”: Pausing to reflect on masculinities in a South African township. *Men and Masculinities*, 25(2), 213-231. DOI: 0.1177/1097184X20925872.

Rice, R. H. (2015). Narrative therapy. *The SAGE encyclopedia of theory in counseling and psychology*, 2, 695.

Rickson, D. J., & Watkins, W. G. (2003). Music therapy to promote prosocial behaviors in aggressive adolescent boys—a pilot study. *Journal of Music Therapy*, 40(4), 283-301.

Schermer, T. W. (2013). The story of manhood: Using a narrative approach to facilitate unique constructions of masculinity. *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health*, 8(2), 136-150.

Scrine, E. (2021). The limits of resilience and the need for resistance: Articulating the role of music therapy with young people within a shifting trauma paradigm. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 26.

Spier, E. (2010). Group art therapy with eight-grade students transitioning to high school. *Journal of the American Art Therapy Association*, 27(2), 75-83. DOI: 10.1080/07421656.2010.10129717.

Thomas, G., & Myers, K. (2017). *The anatomy of the case study*. SAGE Publications. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781473920156>

Tracey, S. J. (2019). *Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting evidence, crafting analysis, communicating impact*. 2nd ed. Wiley Blackwell.

Travis, R. (2013). Rap music and the empowerment of today’s youth: Evidence in everyday music listening, music therapy, and commercial rap music. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 30, 139-167.

Uhlig, S., Jansen, E., & Scherder, E. (2018). “Being a bully isn’t very cool...”: Rap & Sing Music Therapy for enhanced emotional self-regulation in an adolescent school setting—a randomized controlled trial. *Psychology of music*, 46(4), 568-587.

Vuilleumier, P., & Trost, W. (2015). Music and emotions: from enchantment to entrainment. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1337(1), 212-222.

Wheeler, B. L. (2016). *Music therapy handbook*. The Guilford Press.

Appendix 1: Letter to Head of Christ Church Preparatory School and College

Date: _____

**STUDY TITLE: Narrative group music therapy with adolescent boys in disciplinary action at school:
exploring masculinity and emotions**

My name is Lutendo Negota and I am a Master's student specialising in Music Therapy at the University of Pretoria. Music Therapy is an established, evidence-based health profession registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA). Music therapists make use of music within a therapeutic relationship to address the physical, emotional, cognitive, and social needs of individuals, groups, and communities. After assessing strengths and needs, music therapists use techniques such as active music-making with clients, improvisation, song writing, movement, and receptive music listening in their work with clients to enhance well-being.

I am researching the possible value of working therapeutically with teenage boys who are undergoing or who have experienced disciplinary procedures at school. I hope to facilitate group Music Therapy sessions to explore their definitions of masculinity and how they express emotions. I would like to conduct eight group sessions with boys who are interested in freely participating.

For the purposes of this study, with your permission, I would like to work with eight boys in grade eight and/or nine who, as mentioned, have gone through, or are currently undergoing disciplinary procedures at the school. In addition, I would like to kindly request a private room that I may use to conduct the sessions after school. With the permission of the adolescents and their parents/guardians, I hope to video-record the sessions. The sessions will be run at a time that is suitable for the school, as well as the participants. I will then conduct an individual interview with each participant at the end of the process. This will take approximately 20 minutes. The interviews will be video recorded.

The study will only begin after permission has been obtained from the principle of Christ Church Preparatory School and College and ethical approval by the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Humanities, University of Pretoria. The researcher will make use of pseudonyms (which the participants will be able to select themselves) when collecting and analysing data and reporting the findings in order

to ensure their confidentiality. No identifying information will be included in any written documentation to protect their privacy.

The deidentified written descriptions of the video recordings and transcriptions of the interviews will be archived in an electronic password-protected format at the University of Pretoria for 10 years. Future researchers will be able to use this archived data. During this time, if other researchers wish to use this data, they may do so.

I hope this study will contribute to knowledge about adolescent boys' views on masculinity and I hope they may experience the space as an environment where they may express their feelings, share support and companionship.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions.

Researcher: Miss. Lutendo Negota,

079 501 7473, lulu.negota@gmail.com

RESEARCHER & SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE:

Researcher Name: _____

Researcher Signature: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor Name: _____

Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 2: Permission Letter for School Principal of Christ Church Preparatory School and College

Please sign below to indicate that you grant me permission to conduct the research at the school with your learners:

I, _____, principal of Christ Church Preparatory School and College, give permission for Lutendo Negota, to conduct research project entitled, “Narrative group music therapy with adolescent boys in disciplinary action at school: exploring masculinity and emotions” at the school with our pupils. The study has been explained to me and my questions answered to my satisfaction. I understand the learners will be free to choose to participate or not and may withdraw from the study at any time with no consequences. The researcher has explained that sessions and interviews will be video recorded for the purposes of the study.

Name of School Head in Print

Signature

Principal to place school stamp here

Appendix 3: Information letter for Parent/Guardian

STUDY TITLE: Exploring masculinity in Narrative Group Music Therapy with adolescent boys

Dear _____, my name is Lutendo Negota and I am a music therapy master's student at the University of Pretoria.

Music Therapy is an established, evidence-based health profession. Music therapists make use of music within a therapeutic relationship to address the physical, emotional, cognitive, and social needs of individuals, groups, and communities. After assessing strengths and needs, music therapists use techniques such as active music-making with clients, improvisation, song writing, movement, and receptive music listening in their work with clients to enhance well-being.

I would like to invite your son to participate in a research study that I would like to conduct at the school he attends. I would like to explore whether Music Therapy sessions within a secondary school setting may offer participants opportunities to share stories about their experiences as adolescents becoming men, to discuss their life experiences, as well as to explore how they experience music as a medium for emotional expression.

I will facilitate eight music therapy sessions (once a week for 30-45 minutes each). At the end of the process, I will invite each boy to take part in one interview with me. This will take approximately 20 minutes each. As your son's participation is completely voluntary, he will be allowed to withdraw at any time, without any consequences.

I would like to video record the sessions so that I can look back at what happened and the discussions we had. I will use this information to better understand your son's engagement in the process. No-one other than myself and my research supervisor will ever see these recordings. Your son's identity and name will be kept confidential. I will make written descriptions of the video excerpts which will be deidentified (all the boys' names will be taken out) and these documents will be stored in an electronic, password-protected format at the University of Pretoria. Future researchers will be able to use this archived data, and it will be stored securely for 10 years.

Should I identify a need for further intervention, I will request the school's Life Orientation HOD to contact school social worker/counsellor. Alternatively, I will suggest that the L.O. HOD contact the Gauteng Department of Social Development. Additionally, LifeLine, an organisation that provides free telephonic counselling and support, may be contacted. LifeLine contact details: 0800 012 322

Should you require further information regarding the study, please feel free to contact me. My contact details are supplied below. Your decision to allow your child to participate in the study will be greatly valued and appreciated.

Researcher: Miss. Lutendo Negota,
079 501 7473, lulu.negota@gmail.com

Research Supervisor:

Dr. Andeline dos Santos: andeline.dossantos@up.ac.za

Appendix 4: Informed Consent Form for Parents/Guardians

STUDY TITLE:

Narrative group music therapy with adolescent boys in disciplinary action at school: exploring masculinity and emotions

Should you be willing to give permission for your child's participation, please sign below:

I, _____, give permission for my son, _____ to participate in the research project entitled, "Exploring masculinity in Narrative Group Music Therapy with adolescent boys." The study has been explained to me and my questions answered to my satisfaction. I understand that my teenager's right to withdraw from participating or refuse to participate will be respected and that their responses and identity will be kept confidential. I give this consent voluntarily. I agree/do not agree for the sessions and the interview to be video recorded.

Name in Print: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

RESEARCHER & SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE:

Researcher Name: _____

Researcher Signature: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor Name: _____

Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 5: Information letter for Participants

STUDY TITLE: Exploring masculinity in Narrative Group Music Therapy with adolescent boys

Dear _____

I would like to invite you to take part in a music therapy group that I'll be running at your school. I'm a student at the University of Pretoria and I'm busy with a research study. The title of my study is: *Narrative group music therapy with adolescent boys in disciplinary action at school: exploring masculinity and emotions*. If you decide that you want to be part of this study, you will be asked to **participate in a group where we will play music with instruments, listen to music and make art together with me and seven other boys in your school. You won't be pressured to do anything you don't feel like doing. We will have a total of eight sessions together after school. Each session will be 30-45 minutes each. After this process, I would like to have an individual discussion with you about how you experienced the process. There are no right or wrong answers.**

I would like to video record the group sessions so that I can see how we played music together and listen to the discussion we had as a group. I would also like to video record the individual discussion that we have together at the end. No one will be able to see these videos except for me and my teacher.

When I am finished with this study, I will write a report about what I learned for the University where I am studying. This report will not include your name or that you participated in the study. I will be asking all the boys who take part to also respect each other's confidentiality. What gets shared in the sessions needs to stay in the sessions so that everyone feels respected. Remember that you do not have to participate in this study if you do not want to. If you decide to stop taking part after we begin, that's okay too.

After I finish writing up notes from the sessions and the interviews, I will store the information online at the University where I study which will be password protected. The University will keep the information for 10 years. Other researchers might choose to use it, but your name won't be in this document.

Your parents have been asked to sign a consent form, giving you permission to participate. You will also be asked to sign an assent form, where you agree to participate in the research study.

Thank you for considering taking part!

RESEARCHER & SUPERVISOR DETAILS AND SIGNATURE:

Researcher: Miss. Lutendo Negota,

079 501 7473, lulu.negota@gmail.com

Researcher Signature: _____ Date: _____

Research Supervisor:

Dr. Andeline dos Santos: andeline.dossantos@up.ac.za

Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 6: Assent Form for Participants

If you decide you want to be in this study, please fill the form below and sign your name.

I, _____, in grade _____ want to participate in this research study.

The study has been explained to me and my questions were answered. I understand that I can stop taking part at any point if I choose to

I agree for the group sessions and the individual interview to be video recorded.

Learner Name: _____

Learner Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher Name: _____

Researcher Signature: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor Name: _____

Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 7: Schedule of Semi-structured Interviews

1. If we were to think about this process we've been through together as a story, and I started it by saying: "There was once a boy called [add his name] who joined a music group to explore emotions and what it means to be a man...." how would you carry on the story? What was it like for [name]? How did the story play out for him?

2. Now that you've been through this process with this group, how would you describe your own story of being a teenager who is becoming a man?

3. We can also think of our emotions as being part of the story of our lives. What was it like for you to explore your emotions in these sessions?

Prompt: What was it like for you to share your feelings with others in the group?

4. If you imagine your story as you continue in your journey as a man, how do you think emotions will play a role? For example:

- Do you think you'll be a man who expresses his emotions or decides to keep them to himself? Why? If yes, how? To whom?

- Do you think emotions will be helpful for you in some ways or do they just get in the way? How so?

5. Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experience of this music therapy process?

Appendix 8: School Head of Department for Life Orientation

I, _____, Life Orientation Head of Department at Christ Church Preparatory School and College, hereby confirm that I will be available and on standby during the period of time that Ms Lutendo N. Negota is conducting research for the project entitled, “Narrative group music therapy with adolescent boys in disciplinary action at school: exploring masculinity and emotions” at the school with our learners. The study has been explained to me and questions answered to my satisfaction. I understand the learners will be free to choose to participate or not and may withdraw from the study at any time with no consequences. The researcher has explained that sessions and interviews will be video recorded for the purposes of the study.

I commit to being on standby throughout the duration of the study. Should Ms Lutendo Negota identify a need for further intervention for any of the learners that she will be working with, she will notify me, and I will contact the schools counsellor. Alternatively, I will contact the Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa to request the intervention of a counsellor or social workers.

Additionally, Lifeline, an organisation that provides free telephonic counselling and support, may be contacted as per my suggestion to the learners. LifeLine’s contact details are: 0800 012 322

Should you require further information regarding my role in supporting the study, please feel free to contact me. My contact details are supplied below.

Name of L.O. HOD in print

Signature

Date

Cell phone number: _____

Email Address: _____

RESEARCHER & SUPERVISOR DETAILS AND SIGNATURE:

Researcher: Miss. Lutendo Negota,

079 501 7473, lulu.negota@gmail.com

Research Supervisor:

Dr. Andeline dos Santos: andeline.dossantos@up.ac.za

Appendix 9: Approval Letter from the University of Pretoria's Faculty of Humanities Research Ethics committee



Faculty of Humanities

Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe
Lefapha la Bomotheo



2 June 2023

Dear Miss LN Negota,

Project Title: Narrative group music therapy with adolescent boys experiencing disciplinary action at school: exploring masculinity and emotions
Researcher: Miss LN Negota
Supervisor(s): Dr AJ Dos Santos
Department: School of the Arts
Reference number: 13127722 (HUM038/1022 Line 1) (Amendment)
Degree: Masters

Thank you for the application to amend the existing protocol that was previously approved by the Committee.

The revised / additional documents were reviewed and **approved** on 02 June 2023 along these guidelines, further data collection may therefore commence (where necessary).

Please note that this approval is based on the assumption that the research will be carried out along the lines laid out in the amended proposal. Should your actual research depart significantly from the proposed research, it will be necessary to apply for a new research approval and ethical clearance.

We wish you success with the project.

Sincerely,

Prof Karen Harris
Chair: Research Ethics Committee
Faculty of Humanities
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
e-mail: tracey.andrew@up.ac.za

Research Ethics Committee Members: Prof RL Harris (Chair); Mr A Sloos; Dr A-M de Beer; Dr A-dos Santos; Dr P Gubuna; Ms RT Govinder Andrew; Dr E Johnson; Dr D Krige; Prof D Maree; Mr A Mthembu; Dr J Nkomo; Dr J Olieke; Dr C Putbergel; Prof D Rayburn; Prof M Soer; Prof E Taljard; Ms D Mabalaga

Room 7-27, Humanities Building, University of Pretoria, Private Bag 203, Hatfield 0038, South Africa
Tel +27 (0)21 429 4855 | Fax +27 (0)21 429 4500 | Email pghumanities@up.ac.za | www.up.ac.za/faculty-of-humanities

Appendix 10: Transcripts

Transcript of Session 1 (23 May 2023)

Session began with relaxing pre-recorded music and stretching.

An excerpt of the discussion is as follows:

Session time:

MT: Close your eyes. I want you to think of a colour. What does it feel like, smell like, feel like. How does the colour relate to how you feel today? When you're ready, you can gradually open your eyes. So, who's going to start?

T: The colour is more **sad**, not sad... **cold, more relaxed**

MT: Mmm

T: Yea, it's more **deep**, relaxed, chilled out, deep.

MT: If your colour had a **symbol**, what would it look like?

T: It would be like **waves**, **uhmmm sorry**

MT: There's no right or wrong

T: Uhmmm, I'd say like a **turtle**

MT: Okay, that's cool. M?

M: Oh... uhmmm my colour is **eery**

MT: It's **eery** okay. How does it relate to how you're feeling today? And being here?

M: It doesn't, but, I felt like the day did go a little bit **weird**

MT: Yeah? Is there something about today that was a little bit different?

M: Not really, but we did get new subjects.

MT: You got new subjects? Do you feel some type of way (strange) about it?

M: Na (no)

MT: **Excited** about it?

M: Yeah!

MT: I do feel my day was a little **weird**, and **eery**, but, I was **excited**, **I was looking forward to seeing you guys. A?**

A: My day was violet

MT: Violent?

A: **Violet**. It's not linking to today at all, to be honest, it's kind of representing more like **blood** in a way.

MT: Mmmm okay?

A: Uhhmm N?

N: Uhhmm my colour was It was warm and it was also cold at the same time.

MT: Okay

N: Yea cause it was **cloudy** earlier in the day, but now the sun's up, somehow.

MT: Yeah. So with your colours in mind, I **want you to take the drums**, do you know how to play them?

Group: No (T starts playing the drum)

MT: So, T is playing it correctly. It's best to always lift it up off of the ground cause if it's flat on the ground, the sound will be flat, like this (taps drum while resting flat on the ground), but if you lift it, the sound comes from the bottom (illustrates to the group). I want you guys to, Uhm, describe how you're feeling right now, and the rest of the group is gonna copy your sound. So, anyone can start.

A: Uhhm does anyone wanna start? I can start!

(A plays a deep slow beat on the djembe. With a smile on his face, he lifts his shoulders and raises his hand with high energy, beating the drum with determination. The group responds with the same rhythm, but with tentativeness).

MT: Okay cool. Next?

T: N?

A: Well, it's only fair.

MT: Hehe he

(T Plays rhythm on the drum, group responds, with more enthusiasm)

MT: Cool. So with your feelings in mind, I want us to improvise and I want us to listen to each other, and feel each other's feelings as we play. Right, so I'm gonna start and you guys can come in when you feel ready.

(MT starts rhythm on the drum and group joins in with own rhythm and gradually begin to synchronize. After a while, the MT quickens the beat, groups rhythm experiences some desynchrony and confusion by the change in rhythm, and then gradually synchronize once again, with excitement. MT then slows down the rhythm and the group come to a halt)

A: I got so **confused**, but **I wanted to try hard to keep with your rhythm**

T: That **was so cool**, **I want to do that again!**

MT: How did you feel in the moment?

M: Hahaha, I felt kind of **guarded** when it got **faster**.

MT: Guarded? Okay

A: Yeah like I felt caught **off guard** because I didn't know how to compliment everyone

MT: Okay, anyone else want to share how they were feeling when?

M: At the same time, **I felt so engaged when it got faster**, **I felt part of it**, I could hear so many different sounds and my own, **but all at once, together**.

MT: Mmmm, and N, T?

T: Okay, hahaha, *(group starts to laugh with T)* I felt a sense of competition, I wanted to catch up with you [the MT] and then go faster than you *(Participants start whispering to each other)*

MT: Let's listen to T

T: Yea, I felt like **competing**, yea

MT: Okay and N?

N: I felt so **energetic**, it had such a **nice beat** to it and I felt like I could keep up with it.

MT: Okay, so A do you want to start now?

A: No, I think it can be someone else's turn (chuckles embarrassingly)

T: Can I start?

MT: Yea

(T plays an upbeat hip-hop rhythm on the drum and then joins in with him while the MT plays a sustained beat to hold the group. MT gestures to T and he then begins to explore other rhythms and improvises, N then matches T. T gets louder on his drum and the group matches his energy and volume. He then decreases the volume and comes to a slow end)

MT: Nice! Anyone else want to start?

M: Uhhmmm okay (starts with a hesitant beat and suddenly stops). Wait no! Let me start again.

(M Starts with a fast riff on the drum, slows down, and then accelerates again and repeats this rhythm. The group meets and matches this rhythm with now changes and they stop.)

N: Okay let me try **(sighs heavily)**

(N plays a deep slow hip-hop rhythm on his drum. The group join in and the MT adds accents in the pauses and T begins to improvise on the rhythm. After some time, N stops abruptly)

A: **Okay Ma'am**, hahaha, I'll try now

(A plays a light accented rhythm on his drum. The group struggles to catch the best but slowly play along, with their individual rhythms, yet synchronised with A. A then comes to a quick end)

MT: Cool. **Can I go?**

A: Yes L

(MT plays deep quick rhythms on her drum, and then repeatedly sweeps the drum. She repeats this and the group join in. She then starts shouting 'Hey, hey!' with the rhythm. The group chuckles at this and join in tentatively with her as she gestures to the group)

MT: What did you think of that? (Playfully) **I didn't hear your voices** (group chuckles)

N: That was **different**

M: Oh! I really didn't expect that

N: The drum is loud and I didn't know you could go louder L, like wow!

M: Yea like wow, that came out of nowhere!

MT: N, how did that feel?

N: I was **confused** as first, but then it felt so cool, I was **scared** but **free**

MT: Mmmm, A did you feel like you had to watch each other or is L the only crazy one? (Group laughs)

A: Uhhmmm... it depends on what's going on, like the situation, if someone else was doing it.

MT: Okay last thing, you can use the drums or instruments, your voice, lovely voices and let's make some music!

(Group begins to explore instruments. MT guides them on the use of the various instruments).

Mt: Cool so who's gonna start?

Quality: Very explorative, rap/hip-hop genre feel to the music, group presents with high energetic affect, more comfortable playing together and with the MT

MT: Someone want to sing or rap?

N begins to rap

Music slows, T ends with the triangle

MT: So where's the singing, or more rap?

(Group debate on rapping, MT encourages exploration. A starts solid rap beat and group play along again, yet overthinking the process)

MT: Okay let me give a beat. Fast or slow?

N: **A little slow**

(MT starts with a slow solid rap-style beat. T starts humming)

N: Hold on, here I come. *(N starts rapping, group adds percussive sounds, Rapping moves around the circle with nervousness, but shows feelings of excitement from the shared musicking. Group then asks MT to rap which she does. Group shows feelings of being surprised and impressed).*

Key words:

Feelings are colourful: Warm, cold

Feelings look like things: The sun, turtle, waves, deep, blood

Analysis of the session:

The participants seemed calm in the space. The group dynamic were fluid and organic, which could be seen in the banter and laughter shared between them, while observing the music therapy as a character of authority and boundaries between an adult and adolescents. The music-making experience was initially strange, but the experience of musicking together was both nerve-wrecking and exciting. The gradually opened up to the idea of experimenting and exploring what they could do musically.

Session 2 Transcript (25 May 2023)

Session time: 18:00

Boys asked to bring an item that represents themselves as becoming men.

Boys collectively say they could not identify a singular item

M: I don't know what part of me to describe.

A: I have so many, I couldn't think of one

MT: That's okay, out of 5 or 10 items you could think of, pick one, just one.

M: I didn't know how to represent that specific thing, like something that would represent that.

MT: Anything that represents the boy M, the guy M, the man M?

M: Mmmm, I'm not a man yet, I wouldn't consider myself one.

MT: So, what about the man who is becoming? What does becoming look like, hat would describe M, who is becoming a man? You don't have to say it out loud if you.... I don't know if you have that item, or something similar you could think of, or get, or want to describe.

M: I never thought of it as a different...me. I thought it would always be the same me, just me growing emotionally and mentally and stuff.

MT: Yeah, okay, that's cool because I want us to share about that, so whoever is keen to start, there is no right or wrong, because nobody can tell you what kind of a person you are, or are becoming. Who wants to go?

T: Uhm, I actually did bring something

MT: Okay, you can kick us off

T: So this was technically a concept of my cousin, how do I say.... This book changed my life and how I see everything, how I see colours and how I see people and different things. Not just how I see people, but

people for who they are. So basically when I grow up, I want to be a colourful person, someone people want to hang out with, someone who.... Like extroverted

MT: Mmmmm

A: Are you trying to say someone that's like honoured and respectable?

T: (Nods head)

MT: And is there somethings about T now, that's similar to the T you're becoming?

T: Yes, but also not, maybe...when I get older, those parts will show a lot more

MT: Mhmmm, M?

M: Mmmm, I didn't really have anything in mind. I always thought that, uhmmm, I would gain assertiveness and wisdom, deeper understanding about myself as I go along with life, but so far.... I never really get to worry about what that is.

MT: Mmmm and how does it feel now that I am asking you that?

M: It's making me think...uhmmm...like how I'll grow as a man and if I'll be the same

MT: Mmmmm, and A?

A: Uhmmmm, I never really thought that anyone would ask me this question because when I used to go to therapy (I told you the reason why, I think) I didn't really get asked these kinds of questions. I'm usually asked about how I feel about other people and not really about myself, so like this was a change of pace which I like, but I didn't really know how to answer....like.... what would best represent me because I didn't truly know what would best represent me.

MT: Mmm, can you think of three things, three words, something you hope for the future, maybe as you are becoming a man now?

A: I don't consider myself to be a man, maybe not yet, because I feel like there are a lot of things I could improve on. For one, my height, I'm like a midget in my class, I'm the shortest boy.

MT: Mmmm, does that make you feel like less of a boy, or less of a man because you're shorted that others?

A: No! I don't really...care about my height...I've never really cared about my height... maybe because I've never been bullied about my height.... So yeah

MT: Okay, and any other things you hope for?

A: Uhmmmm...I hope I.... I hope I get a wife (chuckles) I'm not joking (looks around at group). I hope I get a wife, get married, have a child or two.... The biggest thing I want is a happy job. The last things I want is an unsatisfying job that I'm miserable in. I want something that I get money for enjoyment. That's why

I've thought of real estate, it's always growing and now, new designs. So yeah, real estate is what I really want to do. I know it's kind of a failing thing in South Africa, not a lot of people can afford to get a house.

MT: Mmmm

A: and obviously inflation keeps rising, petrol keeps becoming expensive. So, I want a good paying job that I will enjoy.

MT: for M and T, can you guys relate to what A's ambitions are, and hopes?

M: Yeah, definitely, like I do think about planning for the future

MT: So A made a good point. It can be difficult to see yourself as a man. It's a process that's still happening, right, but I'm also interested to know if there's things that worry you about your journey – things that could be scary, or different, or challenging?

M: Yeah, kind of, like the future, I don't know what to think cause I don't know what's gonna happen in the future, and... I can't plan out because I don't know how it's gonna go.

MT: Mmmm, Yea. T, you wanted to say?

T: Mmmm, the only thing challenging me now is if I'll get into university. Not everyone gets that opportunity, especially in Art. I feel like in South Africa, art is non-existent or not respected and that's what I want to do and I don't know if I'll survive.

MT: And also if we think of the many challenges in South Africa, like A said, housing is expensive, life is... We have a difficult history, maybe if we think of our parents and the kinds of careers they hope we would do, or not do. So with those thoughts in mind, maybe you could take sometime to show me what that man looks like, or how he is becoming. I have blank paper for you. You can find your own space, move around, here are some colours. Can I encourage you to focus on you and not be distracted by each other
After drawings

46:00

A: So, this is a business man I didn't draw the face because I don't know exactly what I want to be, I don't know exactly who I want to be, I feel like if I do, I could disappoint myself if I don't become that man. I might make some bad decisions. Lets say if I don't want to be an architect for example when I grow up, maybe I might want to be an artist like T, but I am showing some sense of wealth...

MT: Mmmm do you wanna share your image? You can hold it up for us to see (shows the group) Mmmm.

A: I put question marks, instead of a face

MT: Okay, thank you A

A: T?

T: So my person is basically, his shirt is like a basketball shirt, I want to be a man, someone who can basically do as much as he can be as many things as he wants to be

MT: be as much as he can, as many things as he wants to be, mmmm

T: Yea... so like, I want to be an artist, big and tall. Basketball would be a back-up, but I don't think I'll get that tall, haha ha, I don't know.

MT: Hmmmm and for you M?

M: Mmmm, uhmmm for my character, uhmmm, he's obviously grown because I'm not tall yet, but he's grown. He's grown facial hair, which symbolises that growth, and.... I kept a dragon on the shirt because I wanted to symbolise that I will still love what I like, cause I love sci-fi, I love those types of stuff

MT: Okay

M: Yea, I will still like that, it's just what I love, and I gave him a basic outfit because I don't really like wearing extra clothes.

MT: Mmmm okay. How did you guys experience doing this? Picturing a future self? Even sharing with us all as a group?

A: It was pretty nice, uhmmm, what you call it... I felt really cool drawing, this was a fun period of time because we get to do something we like, cause it's beneficial, instead of being forced to do stuff we don't like doing, like school. This made me think.

MT: Mmmm, some other thoughts?

M: Mmmm, I enjoyed it, not something I'm used to. It felt like a fun way to express myself

MT: Do you feel like you have a better understanding of something that lies ahead of you?

M: Kind of but not necessarily.

MT: Kind of, but not necessarily?

M: Mmmm, I want to leave the future for the future, and now for now.

A: Like trying to live in the present?

M: Yea

A: Respectable

T: Mmmm, if I could finish, I was gonna say there was gonna be like king status on my clothes. I have to do what I love. But maybe not all of us.

A: Yea, like a lot of people do stuff to fit in. I don't want to do stuff like that but here it feels cool, like we don't, I think.

MT: Mmmmm, that's interesting. Are you guys friends, outside of this group?

Group: Yes!

MT: So you guys know each other fairly well?

A: Yea like before you came in the holiday, we had a sleepover and had a drawing competition. We did a lot of things together that we can share, but



we don't. So we were at M's house. When we were playing, T broke the balcony window.... (A continues story about a sleepover they shared in the school holidays).

56:54

MT: Okay, so let's have a chat. So usually, people may say girls are emotional right?

Group: Yea

MT: What about boys?

A: Uhhmm it depends on the situation, for example let's say my dog dies. My dog died last year, my original dog's name way (inaudible). She died last year; she was hit by a car. My mom told me when I got home from sport practice. And another example... this is gonna sound dumb, but I recently lost my Roblox account (laughs with group) and...

MT: Yea, but that's still upsetting right?

A: Yea, mmmmm

M: He lost all his progress.

MT: Do you guys feel like emotions are helpful at all or do they sometimes just get in the way?

A: Sometimes they are helpful, but they can get in the way

Group: Yeahhh!

A: Like let's say some people ask for my opinion on social media, like I can't help but be biased. I can't say I won't be. Judging on how I feel, depending on my relationship.

MT: So do they get in the way?

A: Like in class, we were learning about Adolf Hitler. M, don't laugh. So, he got sentenced for 9 months for staging a coup.... So originally that could be a death sentence. So, the judge sentenced him to 9 months just because he likes Hitler and didn't like the Jews.... So, they do in the way

M: Yea they can. Society has a norm that boys don't show their emotions, that they should be strong, provider of the house and they tend to hide their emotions to seem strong.

MT: Do any of you feel like you have to do that sometimes?

Group: No

MT: You feel like you can easily express your emotions?

Group: Yes

MT: Is there a good way or a bad way to express emotions?

A: For me, I can say yes

T: It depends, at school I don't really care at all cause I get into trouble either way, but yeah, you shouldn't really hurt

MT concludes by thanking the participants and asking the group to write poems about masculinity for the next session.

Analysis, artwork and key elements from Session 2 discussions:

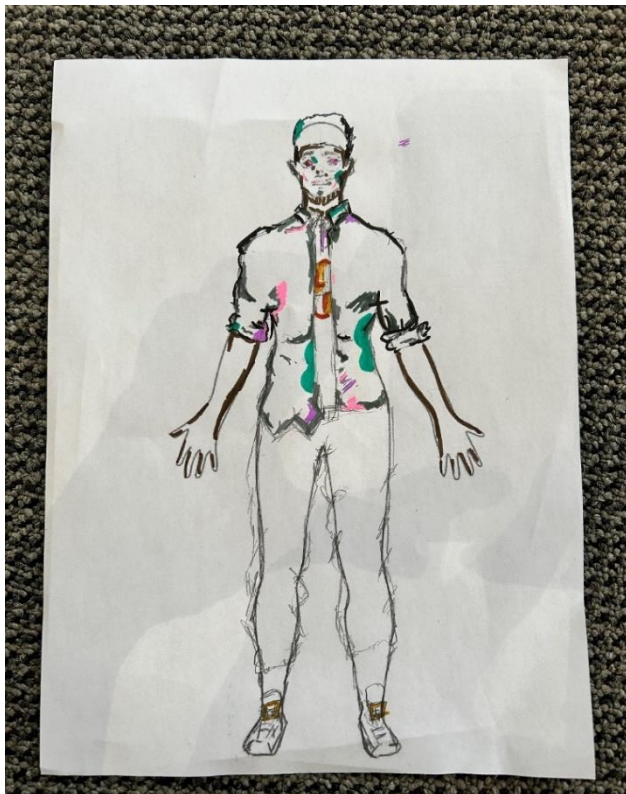
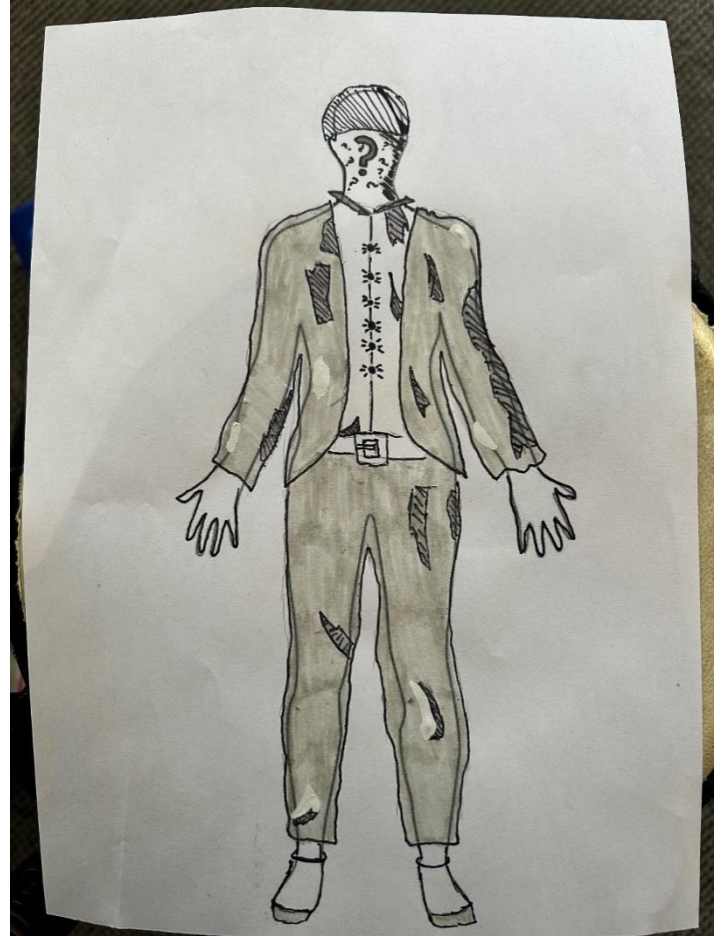
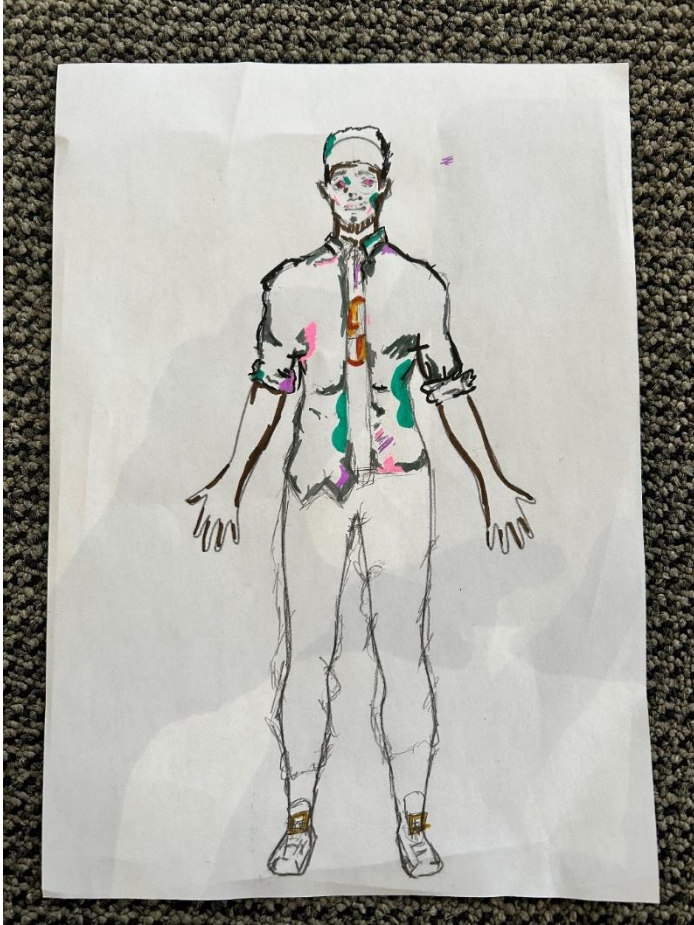
Friendship: The Music therapist and researcher gathered participants at the school who were facing disciplinary action. In this session, a participant revealed that the group participants shared a friendship outside of the therapy process. This clarified the comfort participants shared within the therapy process, as well as the development of comfort around the therapist, who at this initial stage, was still a stranger. The participants are eager to experience the music therapy process as a group of friends.

Self-identity and aspirations for the future: Though the participants had the background of being participants facing disciplinary action at school, now participating in a music therapy process, the participants were able to express themselves as individual adolescent boys and positively speak about their future ambitions. Imagining their future selves was challenging and brought feelings of ambiguity, and confusion, but also evoked ambition and hopes for a successful future.

Emotions and Masculinity: The participants felt that people in general should express their emotions, but that they can also be obstructing and prevent objectivity. A participant highlighted that societal norms also affect boy's/men's abilities to openly express their emotions as society often has the expectation that men 'should be strong'. He added that this sentiment does not apply to him. In observing who they are, and are becoming as men, the boys felt that they do not necessarily see themselves as men, but that they hope to develop into men who are physically well-built, strong, with facial hair, and successful occupations.

Music therapy and the therapeutic relationship: At this early stage of the process, the participants were beginning to open up to the music therapist about their personal feelings and thoughts. They express enjoyment and pleasure from the activities and that music therapy was offering them an avenue to think about their emotions and masculinity. Group music therapy was also identified as an activity that was more enjoyable than attending school.

Illustrations of Participants drawings (M, A and T respectively)



Boys/Men

- becoming is a process
- I am not a man, yet
- Good man
- Creative man

Ambiguity

- Don't know who I am yet

Therapeutic Relationship

- Exploring the becoming man
- Journey together
- Pensive questioning
- Lively banter
- Enjoyable othering

Friendship

Shared experience, but different

Emotions

- Challenge of situational response
- Right emotioning, wrong emotioning
- Be now, worry later
- Happy man, miserable man

Ambitions

- Successful man
- decent boy, improved man

Transcript of Session 3 (30 May 2023)

A: And **fun!**

N: **I feel happy to be back,** yeah.

MT: We're glad to have you back. Yeah, so in what ways can we like, can we live life in that way? Be more expressive? Kind of letting things come out of nowhere, rolling with it? Laughing about it?

A: **Being wild!** **But you can't if you pay taxes.**

MT: But you don't work. Why are you thinking of taxes if you don't work yet?

T: We will when we are older. **Sometimes its better to worry now,** than when you're older. **I can be more prepared**

MT: Okay, but you can't change that, right? You can't even go to the South African Tax Revenue Services and say "I'm not paying my taxes this month" – they will come after you. And it happens involuntarily, because when you get paid at work, they immediately take the money out for taxes, there's no way around it, so I wouldn't stress too much about this now.

A: See, **that's why being an adult is so stressful.**

T: Yea, **like how will I be a provider?**

Session time: 29:27

MT: I would like us to do something. Do you guys usually use pastels?

Group: Yes

N: Can I go to the bathroom?

MT: Yes, you can go to the bathroom. Let's take three minutes (MT takes colours and paper out to prepare for the activity)

A Three-circles process followed, with carefully selected pre-recorded music

The participants were asked to reflect on the following in three stages:

1. *What stands out for you in your past as a young boy?*
2. *What is going to propel you into the future, and what will you leave behind?*
3. *There is an imaginary door that says 'future' on it. When you open the door, what do you see?*

MT: Who would like to start us off?

N: I'll go after someone else

Participants stare at each other (Disrupted by N's dad) (Participants decide to play a rock, paper, scissors game to decide – loser gets to speak first)

T: Okay, I guess I should start with mine. So, in one, I guess you might wonder what these colourful circles are. They are **bubbles**. It's basically the one thing I remember from my **childhood** – but it's **too complex to draw**. I loved how they were so colourful when reflecting against the **sun**. I didn't get it, but I liked it and **wanted to live in the bubbles and be able to make more while I'm inside them.**

Mt: Okay, and the next one?

T: So, the thing that will take me to my future are my **ambitions and dreams**, so **everything like basketball, drawing** and that. The things I'm leaving behind are negative thoughts, **criticizing myself on my drawings and personality, you know.**

MT: Mmmm

T: And my last drawing is...the first thing I ever drew when **I fell in love with drawing** was something like this (illustrates drawing)

MT: Okay, that's cool. Is there something about it that stands out, specifically when you opened the door?

T: When I opened the door...I don't know, I just like felt **powerful**, like that first feeling of enjoying **freedom**, and like, kind **of respecting myself**. Like **I hope to be a cool guy some day**.

MT: Mmmm, that's cool. Thank you for sharing T. M, is there anything you'd like to share with us?

M: Yea, I'll start at number one. I don't remember much about **my childhood**. **I felt like I had my eyes closed the whole time**. Uhhmm, it was just a feeling I remember, yeah. I remember feeling aa sense of familiarity. I don't remember what happened, but like it felt familiar to me. And the number two, uhhmm... so my old ambitions and stuff are here, **where I'm going to move past the bad stuff now**. Mmmm. And number three, I wanna see myself **as peaceful** like this **man sitting on a bench** (illustrates drawing) doing art, but I didn't **take time into consideration**, so, I didn't add more colour.

MT: Okay, so is that you on the bench?

M: Yea

MT: Okay, thank you for sharing M.

A: Who's next?

N: Uhhmm so mine. The first one is **my childhood** (alter voice to sound playful and child-like, yet dark). It's me being **playful and careless** and **owning the universe**, and I used to **imagine being a superhero** or something. And they the second one, uhhmm, the thing I want to go to is my pencil, my art. **And then I'm leaving my wants** – things that I don't really need now, so I can just put that aside and **gain stuff I need**.

MT: Mmmm

N: The third one is how I want to be in the **future**, its art, mostly art and then I want to be in this place (illustrates drawing – a studio), it has everything I want, and the pencil I carried **over so I can be art**.

MT: Mmmm, can you tell me about this? (MT points to parts of circle 3)

N: Oh yea! The trophies. I am a very **competitive person** sometimes and I like **to win most of the time** and then I want that to **show in my future**.

MT: Mmmm, thank you N, thank you for sharing:

A: (stands and hold the image up) Yea, so, this is me in **my childhood** (point to circle 1). Uhhmm, when I was a child, **I used to cry** for the stupidest reasons, like literally let's say I'd stub my toe, **I'd cry**.

T: But **that's a valid reason**

MT: Yea, thank you T.

A: Uhhmm lets say, my skin is itchy , yea, I'd cry, cause then it would start to irritate me. The flower represents, cause when I was a child, at a specific moment, I was cutting a flower, and what do you call it, uhhmm it has thorns on it, but I didn't know, and I didn't know what thorns means, and so I rubbed it and bled out. When I saw the **blood** on my hand, I was bleeding so much, so yeah, that's what I tried to show

here. When I got older, but was still a child, I thought only girls like flowers and that they like crying so much and I didn't want to be laughed at as a boy that likes flowers or cries a lot for no reason you know. The second picture...I'm leaving behind all the issues that aren't cured in my family. My mom, or my grandma, she had six children, initially nine, but three dies when they were born. My mom is the last born, and they named her (K), for comfort. So, and this is basically, I don't know why I drew a flower, it just came to mind. That's why I drew a small house at the bottom, I don't know how to explain the flower, so yeah. My future, I drew a dark space (coloured almost the entire circle in black). The this is I fear that at some point, I might, feel as if I'm about the fail or something. Yea but (clears throat) I might not succeed – that's the darkness, but the light is the bit of hope I have.

MT: Okay, can I ask, I am wondering, what makes you fearful of not being able to achieve your ambition, or not being successful?

A: Probably because there is always someone who's gonna be better than me, you know. Uhhmm most probably and...that's the reason I feel...I fear that life doesn't always go your way, so then maybe I want to succeed, but some people are just better than you.

MT: Mmmm thank you for sharing. So, can you maybe share how you guys are feeling, after sharing, especially as friends, kind of experiencing this separate type of space, but together at the same time?

A: Uhhm I felt...I still feel fine...maybe its affected them

MT: And last week, I asked about your feelings as becoming men, and emotions. Are they helpful, or can they get in the way?

N: Some people are scared of showing emotions, because they observe others that hide their emotions instead of expressing what they actually believe, or what they want to tell everyone.

MT: Mmmm, and for you, do you feel like that's a possibility, or do you sometimes feel like you have to brush them aside?

N: Hhmmm, sometimes.

MT: Mmmm

A: Can I add to the emotions thing? I feel like emotions make us people. What would we be if we didn't feel, like robots or something?

N: Like AI

A: How would we be able to mourn someone's death? How can you be human if you always have the same expression, or feelings all the time? And we wouldn't know what's normal if we don't feel.

MT: If you guys think of men in your lives, your dads, brothers, grandads, cousins, have you experienced them as expressing emotions in front of you?

Group: Yes kind of

T: I've never seen my dad cry....other than being happy I don't know, like I'm the oldest kid at home, I have two younger sisters. My dad always says me and him are the men of the home, so we need to take care of my mom and my sisters. Sometimes I feel a bit weird cause I don't really feel like a man yet and stuff. But I do also wanna be like my dad. Sometimes I feel that responsibility cause I am the oldest and my sisters are like a few years younger than me.

N: Especially grandparents, maybe also because we don't see them that much

M: I spend a lot of time with my dad, but we don't talk a lot about feelings. It's kind of awkward with him. Most of the time, he's serious, so maybe in a way, I kind of also feel weird crying and stuff. My brother told me that like if stuff feels hard, its better to hold it in cause its weird guys cry. And other people can kind of see you as weak and stuff.

MT: Yea, and for you A?

A: Uhhmmm, I've seen my dad show emotions, like cry and stuff with us, and my mom, especially like with what I told you (A mentioned in the previous session that his parents were contemplating divorce). I've seen my dad happy, sad, disappointed, uhhmm depressed.

MT: Do you feel like this affects your ability to express your emotions?

A: No

T: Not really, I guess I don't think about it that much. I'm thinking about it more now. I guess because you're asking us to as we go.

M: Not me, but overall if men act one way, we develop and try to act the same way

N: Yea, and like society does have like, ways they thing men should act, even like school and stuff. So even if we don't think about it all the time, we kind of act that way cause that's what we see. Everyone is doing it, so we end up thinking that that's how we should be.

MT: Mmmm, and to follow that example. Please bring your poems in the next session

Analysis, artwork and key words:

Emotions, boys, man, society, future aspirations, fears

In this session, participants were beginning to show openness with each other and the therapist. Participants began sharing more about their views of themselves, matters that concern them and what ambitions they have for their future selves. As the therapist asked questions about whether they can view themselves as men, some participants felt that this is a distant self they cannot yet imagine, but were still able to relay the ways they hope they can develop. Making used of art through the three-circles technique, allowed participants to access these parts of themselves, as well as to see how their pasts have affected the teenagers they are now. The participants shared stories about male figures in their own life expressing

emotions at time, but also that societal norms of men expressing emotions affect their views on whether it is appropriate or not for boys and men to express emotions. By bringing these thoughts forward, the therapist began challenging them on their views and offered space for them to openly express these views. After engaging in the three-circles technique, they were invited to look at what the experience has left them feeling about their journey as becoming men as they reflect on this within a music therapy group.

Image of M's three-circle and reflection:

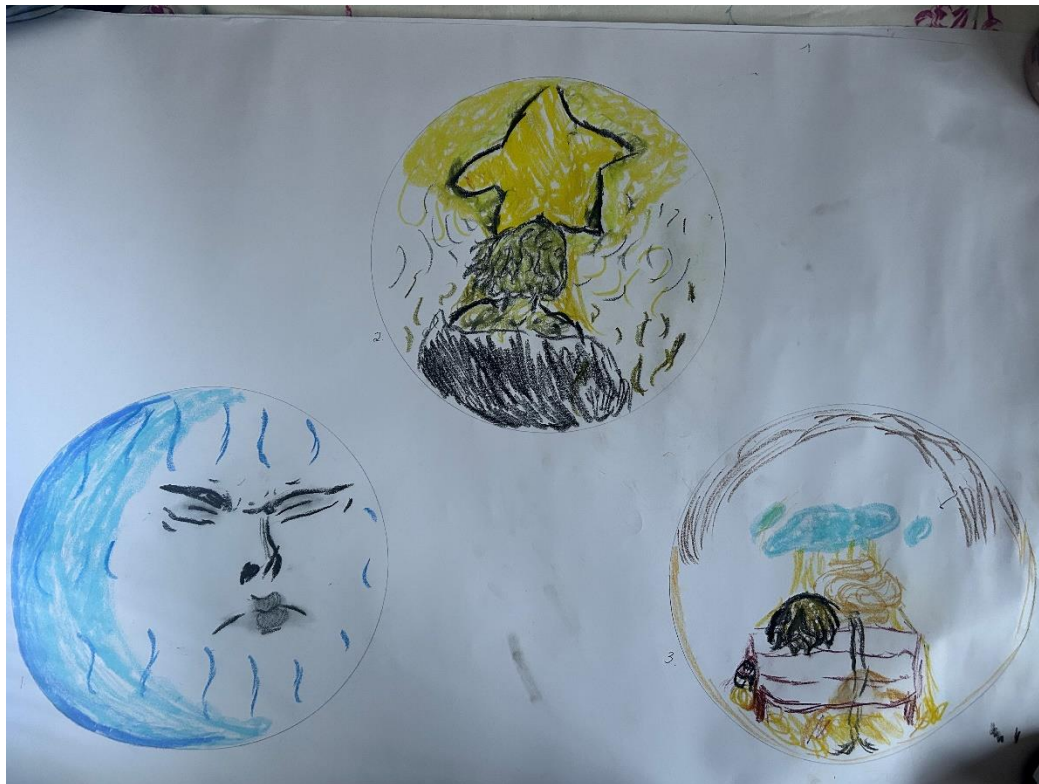




Image of N's three-circles and reflection:

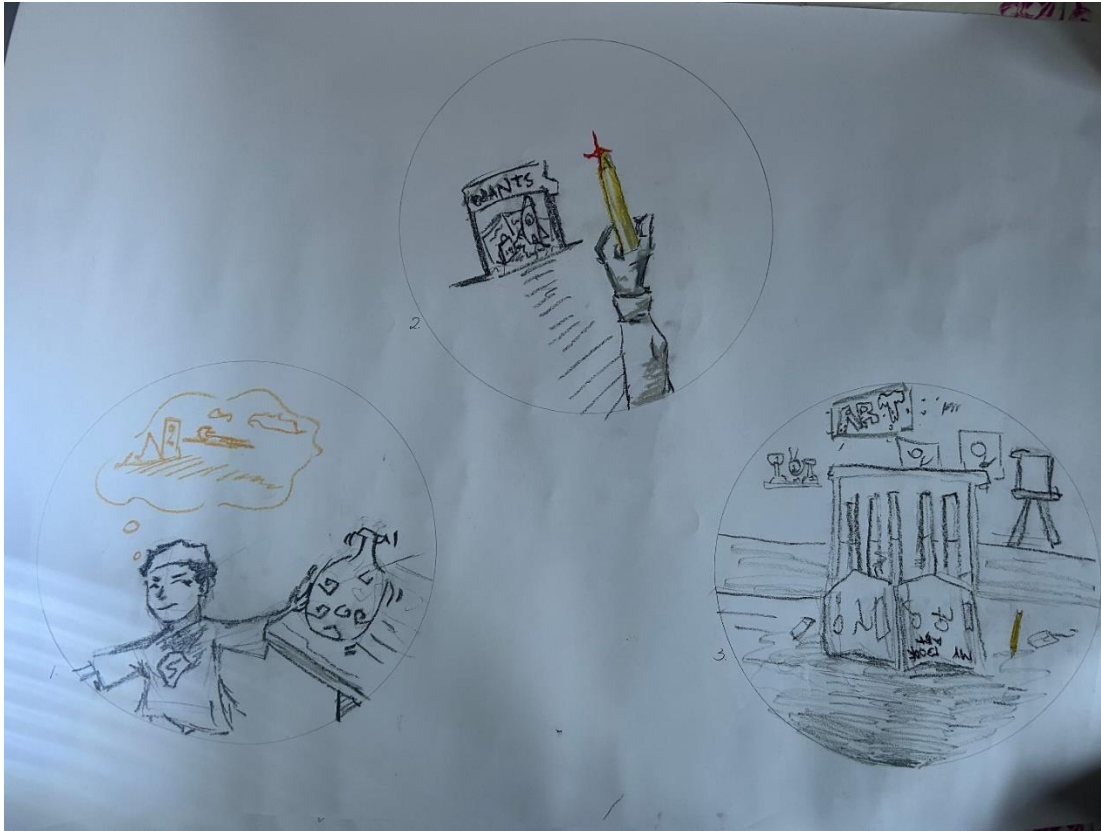


Image of T's three-circles and reflections:

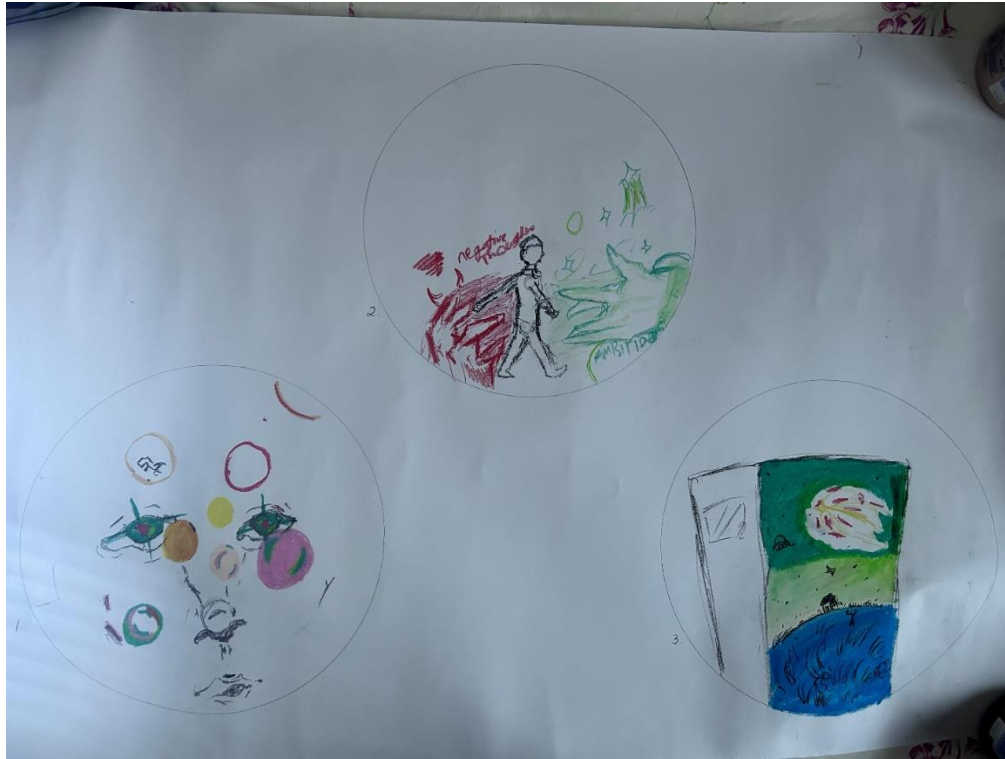




Image of A's three-circles and reflections:



Session 4 (1 June 2023):

MT: So, come around the circle guys. So, before we do our poetry, I want to find out from you guys how you are today?

A: L, I think I need to go to the hall and ask them to mute out the sound so we can start? (The main hall had microphones on that were sending out sound into the room being used)

MT: Yes that would be cool. Let's sit down. I want to hear how you guys are doing? How has your day been? How are you feeling right now? Did you find anything difficult about today

A: No

MT: did you find anything great about today?

T: today was pretty average

N: I forgot how today went

T: today was **boring**. But someone kept stealing from other people

A: someone kept stealing?

T: yes!

A: oh wait, was it that other guy?

T: no, I think they know but they don't know how to stop him

N: I kinda forgot how today went cause not much happened

MT: So, not much happened?

N: Yea, just some tests

A: yea

MT: and do you have a lot of homework?

T: no not really. Today started off okay and then when we had Afrikaans, everyone was like over excited by this guy. He was selling

MT: what is he selling?

T: sherbet and snacks. People kept stealing from him

A: so people were just taking

N: a lot!

T: Yea, a lot before he noticed.

MT: So, what did the teacher do or say?

T: the teacher didn't really notice cause some people were coming from the bathroom and it distracted her

MT: okay...and how are you guys feeling about being here now

N: Way better

A: yea, relaxed. Is that a flute L?

MT: it's a recorder, it's my first instrument

N: yea that's cool! I like recorders, I used to play one

T: me too, when I was still in primary school.

MT: Mhmmm, maybe I can play some later? So A, would you like to read your poem for us?

A: so 'Men'

T: You want us to play some music with you?

A: No, I would like silence, maybe afterwards if there's a way to make a sound with you, we can try. So,

Men,

long known for their muscles

They work hard to make their hustles

Expected to be heartless

To some that may be worthless

Supposedly having no weakness

But we will never be promised”

Okay so that’s masculinity

Okay so, Childhood:

I never lived in the ‘hood’

I always had food

My family was kind

The type that is hard to find

I always had a clue and always knew how to stay true

It’s a bit hard to explain but yea that’s me.

N: I think M is coming back

MT: should we wait for him?

T: yea

MT: welcome M, how are you Sir?

M: I’m very good and you!

MT: I’m alright, **glad to see you.** You can join us with your poems?

M: Uhm I wanna quickly write it down again

MT: Okay write it down again. In the meantime, we are sharing our poems. Thank you, A., Who is next?

A: I pick N.

N: Uh uh, why do you always pick me, let’s go to T

A: okay you know L, I pick N, then he picked me, so I’m picking him again

MT: Haha ha!

N: uhm I guess I could go

MT: great! Let's do this. Bam!

N: I'd like to give mine a nice big sound. Uhmhm so my **masculinity** one is:

"Big!

Strong

Flex, flex, flex

Big, strong"

A: this sounds like a theme to a show, or something like that

MT: Wait, wait, wait, let's hear N. Can you start again?

N: yea.

" Big, Strong

Flex, flex, flex.

Big, Strong

Flex, flex, pex

Big, strong

Plex, plex, complex

Oh so weak am I

Don't even know how to tie a tie

Cry, sob

Gym, gym, gym

Cry, sob

Gym, Jim, him

Cry, sob

I want to be him, him, him”

MT: nice! very cool

A: I want him! Haha ha I want him

T: what you want him?

Mt: he said I want to be him, him, him.

N: Mhmmm

MT: Cool I like that N

A: yes that was pretty good. Mine wasn't really slam-poetry, it was like words I threw together

MT: yea but still good. Cool so N you want to do the next one?

N: yea. The **childhood one**?

“ I was a young boy,

Who was full of joy

Who didn't care about the dirt on my hair

Who looked, and just stared

At the nightly skies

Dreaming about pies

Oh! So innocent was I.

Was a kid whose bedtime was certain

Now I just forget to close the curtains

Oh! How I didn't care about my looks

Wish I just knew what it took

Oh! So innocent was I"

MT: mhmmm, nice, nice nice

A: would you consider yourself as still innocent

MT: Well...

A: Yea it's up to him to say

MT: well lose a little bit of that as we grow right, cause there is a lot that we learn that we didn't know or maybe we didn't have the mind space to comprehend then what we know now

A: Mhmmm true L. Cause there was an assembly we have here at school and they were talking about porn

M: Yea I remember that

N: why are you talking about that?

MT: and what are your thoughts around that?

A: it's true

N: yea it's true

MT: what did they discuss with you guys about that?

A: they were talking about how many people here at school have seen porn

MT: and can you relate

M: mmmm

T: that's just disgusting

A: probably everyone here has seen porn but then didn't get addicted to it

M: huh! What do you mean? Just because you've seen it doesn't mean you have to go to it again!

A: we'll I'm saying we all saw it, and it was quite cool to see, but not that we went to it again, cause M we saw it at your house haha ha

T: on an illegal website!

N: do they even have every episode

T: how do you know?

A: the only reason I know we've all seen it is cause I was there and I know they all had something they liked

Group: denies embarrassingly

MT: do you want to speak a bit more to that?

M: see L it's... it's him

N: I don't even know that

A: haha ha, they all looking at me because they know it's true!

MT: okay cool, let's come back to the circle

N: yes, can we let T go?

MT nods head

T: okay,

"What is masculinity?"

The ability to show leadership

Or the strengths and ability to blink

Men are destroyers of what truly matter

Emotions

True Emotion

Not just some fake face men put on

We are meant to be the provider

Emotionless robots society has put and built into a programme

Masculinity, or is it a front of endless pain and suffering in this rogue and corrupt world?

Suicide, pain and all of this for what?

To stereotype a gender of true magnificence, true beauty.”

Okay that’s it

A: wow T, good poem

T: thanks, okay the **childhood one**

“This was a time for divine happiness

A time where school homework and the destructive thoughts of reality did not concern my soul

I could let my imagination go wild

Dinosaurs, dragons and fairytales

Aren’t just a dream but a reality

Figmentations of things that others see as weird does not concern me, but rather concerns others

Endless candy everywhere, and yet, nothing

Alas, it’s just my past.”

MT: mhmmmm. M, it is your turn

M: uhmmm okay, I’m not sure

MT: there’s no right or wrong

M: I think I did it wrong

MT: it’s okay, **there is no right or wrong**

M: okay I’ll try, it’s just that I did it on a change, like how masculinity will affect me as I grow. Uhmmm.

“I feel the same

Why, am I to blame

I have grown but as a person, this hasn't shown

This stuff doesn't happen in a jiffy

Although, I do feel a bit iffy

Do I still have to wait as if there is a certain date?

My mind constantly ponders if I have to wait any longer

Am I a man or a boy?"

MT: Cool, very nice!

A: Yea very nice

M: uhmmm childhood:

"The toys that bring fun to all the boys

The smell of flowers

Oh I could smell them for hours

Oh I love"

Uhmmm I want to change this a bit

MT: yea sure.

M: **can I restart?**

MT: Of course you can.

M: Uhm,

"The toys that bring fun to all the boys

The smell of flowers

Oh I could smell them for hours

A birthday here, a birthday there

All the birthdays are happening everywhere

I remember a fresh breeze

Not having to worry about my marks because school was full of such ease

I loved the life where I could just think

But...”

Yea it stops there.

MT: Nice M. How did you guys feel about saying your poems out loud and sharing it?

A: Uhhmm I felt okay. It **didn't really affect me.** I think mine wasn't the best

M: It **felt fun and normal**

N: For me it was fun but we do it a lot in English class

T: I've done it in class as well but today it was **fun and interesting**

MT: Okay great. Can we take our poems and highlight the words that stand out to you the most? It can be any color to bring up the ones that stand out to you the most.

The participants highlight the key words

MT then invites them to show the words on a piece of paper, written or drawn.

MT: tell me about the words

A: I like strong, **I want to be strong**

M: it's not my picture but I want to be **kind,** I like that

N: the **pastels** are so **satisfying and frustrating**

MT: are there words you relate to?

A: “Gym, smart, worthless, diet, joy, care, innocent”

T: best

N: Swing, Swing

M: Low

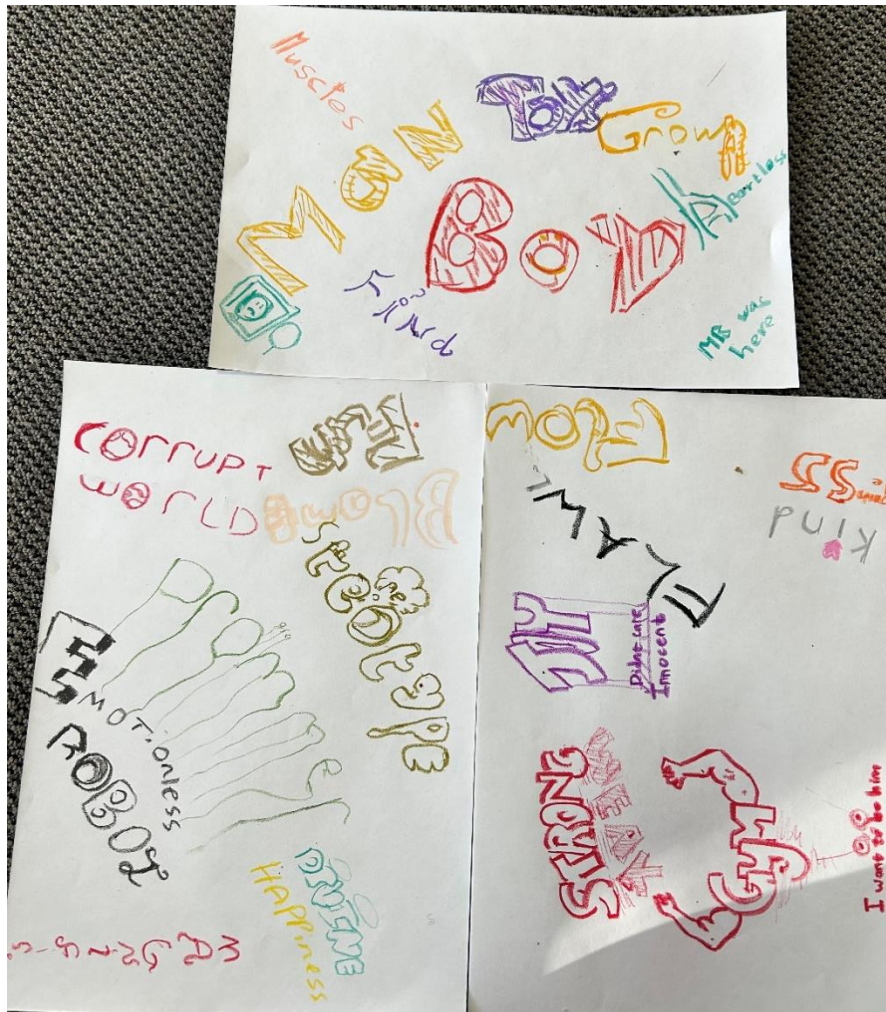
MT: Mmmm, okay.

Boys go into looking at the pictures and discussing who drew which images. MT invites participants to find space in the room to relax to do receptive experience.

Analysis and artwork in session 4:

Key words: Childhood, masculinity, emotions, future

In this session, story-telling through poetry was engaged. Through the medium, participants thoughts of themselves, emotions, the past, the world and the future were explored. The participants shared in more details about themselves as teenagers and views of their childhood. Through writing the poems themselves, the participants began exploring the concept of and reflecting on becoming men and aspirations for their future. The participants were opening up to each other, through sharing, and beginning to include the music therapist into their circle and world view with less tentativeness. Participants were encouraged to identify words within their individual poems that are important. Thereafter, they engaged in a process of writing and drawing these words on a sheet they shared, opening up space to share their emotions and thoughts with each other, and about one another’s key words.



Session 5 transcript (6 June 2023)

25:31

MT: okay so I want you guys to go through a journey. I want us to reflect on where you guys are right now in your life, as teenage boys, at school. Sometimes school is cool, sometimes it's tough. But it's a stage that you're all going through together. And now you're here, and you're friends. I'm interested to hear what you are reflecting on with everything we have done so far, the art, drawings, pictures and the words you reflected on from your masculinity and childhood poems. What are you expecting of yourselves, and each other as you are becoming men, as you are developing into men. Do you feel aware that you are developing into men?

A: **no**

M: yea

MT: Yea? In what ways are you aware of that.

M: I know that I am gonna grow up.

A: like right now

MT: yes you are right now, aren't you?

A: I don't know mentally and emotionally to be honest.

M: yea we are growing physically and mentally and I think over time we are changing

A: you guys are growing, physically.

N: what?

M: huh?

MT: he said physically and mentally, right M. So A?

A: I think only physically. Uhm I don't have the mentality of a man yet

MT: in what ways?

A: I think I am still far too childish

MT: far too childish? Okay. Don't you think maybe men can be childish, grown men?

A: we'll, of course masculinity automatically makes me think of men being serious

MT: yea?

A: so, well the way I was raised, then no, I don't think men can be childish?

MT: okay, do you think you're allowed to be childish when you're a man T?

T: I'm not sure.

MT: how old is man? Maybe I should ask you guys that, how old is a man?

T: 18 and above

A: 17, 16 and above

M: 20, 22

N: 25 and above

MT: okay so A says 17 and above, T says 18 and above, M says around 22 and N says 25 and above. So at these different stages that you guys define what would be a man, do you think feel like he isn't allowed to be childish? Or he shouldn't be childish?

M: he can!

T: yea he can be

MT: what's being childish. M what would you see a man doing and think to yourself 'oh my word! That's so childish'?

T: dancing

MT: Dancing maybe, okay.

M: uhm certain mannerisms. Like making noises, or like fart noises around people

A: haha, sounds like you're describing yourself

M: haha, yea I am, am still childish

MT: A, can you think of somethings a man could do that you would find really childish? Like 'that man is being really childish'.

A: uhm when I was... Like if we're talking like right now, I can't really think of something. But like when I started coming to this school, I'd say maybe video games.

MT: when you're 16, would you consider stopping playing video games

A: no I can't imagine that right now

MT: okay, T, for you, when you're 18?

T: no not really, playing video games has been such a huge part of my childhood. And older people do play video games, even if their meant for kids

MT: okay. So for you guys, are there things that you expect to stop doing when you're older? To be a mature man

A: not buy a kiddies meal

Group laughs

T: having a tantrum

A: yea that's childish. I need to be way more responsible than I am right now

M: me too.

MT: okay so A and M are thinking of responsibility. To who? Or for yourselves?

A: yea not really for someone but like to myself. To show those around me that I am responsible. Like having work and taking care of my wife and son. Yea

MT: okay, so I want you guys to go through a journey of looking at, where your mind is at. (MT rolls out paper with the boys in the floor). So, I'm gonna ask you guys to reflect on the paper here and the colours. Reflect on where you're at now as thinking of yourselves as becoming men. All the thoughts we have shared, the changes you're experiencing mentally, emotionally and physically. I am going to play a few songs, they are short. When the music changes, you need to move to another spot.

MT plays snippets of pre-recorded music for the participants and they begin the sonic sketch process.

At the end of the process, she invites them back into the space

MT: can we share one feeling we are feeling as we look at the sketch

M: confused

T: moving

N: alive and creative

A: Random

T: I want to say creative but then N said it

MT: yea that's cool. Can we frame the items that stand out for us?

N: I'm feeling the 'strong' and 'kind'

T: this is cool

MT: what was this process like, as the music changes

M: it was exciting

T: a bit of pressure

MT: yea and when you guys moved around and someone would draw next to or on top of your drawing?

M: a bit annoying

N: I liked how it changed the pictures

A: it was funny and annoying

MT: and what would you guys name this picture, if we could name it.

A: yes

M: Yes

T: yes, I agree with them

MT: and you N

N: I'd call it grown. Something like, Yes, Grown.

MT: Okay. What are you taking away from this whole experience?

M: It was very quick... but it felt long and quick because we kept switching

MT: Mmm okay. A, what are you taking away from this?

A: Creativity. I am creative

T: Creativity! A lot of thoughts, colour, and maturity

N: I'd say... simplify

MT: Okay do you want to say more to that?

N: I think like...yea...think before you draw, but simpler.

MT: Mhmmm and what does this [image] say to the boys who are becoming men, the Yes, the grown, creativity, maturity, simplicity, quick. What does it have to do with you guys as you're becoming men?

M: So, we are all different, with different dreams and stuff. Yeah...like we're unique!

N: We're growing at different paces

M: Yeah and in different ways.

A: We are growing and knowing

T: Everyone has their own way of doing things, and it's not nice to try to change that about them, it's what makes them great.

MT: Mmmm... it's good.

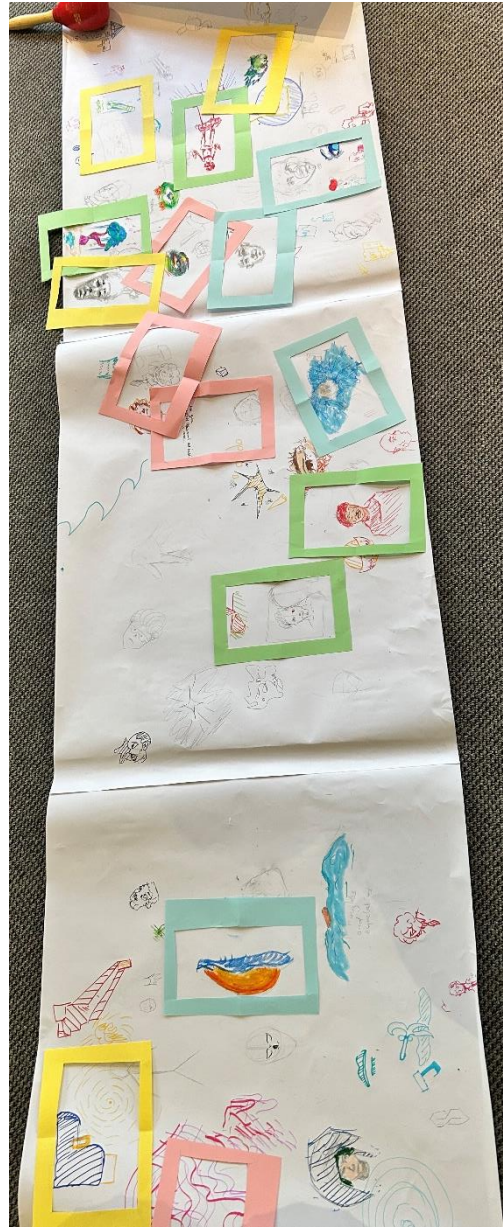
M: I like that we can't put our picture into a specific style.

MT: Mhmmmm. I would like to give you something you can prepare for our next session. Let's sit on the floor and breath together....

Analysis and artwork in session 5:

Key words: Childishness, becoming men, creativity, maturity, unique

Analysis: In this session, the music therapist opens with a discussion on defining men. Participants identified maturity and taking responsibility as important behaviours a man displays. They further elaborated that they do not see themselves as men, as they do not yet display maturity and take responsibility for others. The participants highlighted more details about their self-identity. The music therapist invited them to do a sonic sketch, which opened the way for richer group dynamics, introspection, and their reflection on expressing emotions and becoming men.



Session 6 transcript (8 June 2023)

Superhero theme

MT: so did you guys prepare your superhero work?

Group: Yes

T: my character is very interesting, I can't wait to tell you guys about it.

MT: I'm excited but wait. This is not just a character, this is T, this is M.

N: ohhhh that's gonna make it so much more interesting

MT: yes! So I'm excited to hear. Cool? We're good? We're doing it? We're ready?

Group: yes!

MT: great, hit it!

T: Okay so....

MT: what is your name?

T: (adds raspiness to voice) my name is Dark artist

Group laughs

T: haha ha, he. Has a dark aura

MT: where are you from

T: the UK

A: speak with a British accent, so that we can get more...more of a feel

MT: he already changed his voice, the dark artist (imitates T). So, tell me, how did you become a superhero

T: I ate edible space rocks that were radioactive

MT: okay, yeah and then? Do you have family? Where do they come from?

Group chuckles

T: I do not have a family, I'm an orphan. I was orphaned as a kid. There was a boy who took care of me when I was a kid who I thought was my uncle

MT: ahaaa, okay. What does your costume look like

T: Well it's mostly black covering my body and there where the eyes are, they are red with a swirl of rainbow.

MT: do you have a **secret identity**?

T: Yes

MT: aha?

T: my real name is Daniel Young.

MT: oh? Who is Daniel Young

T: Daniel Young is a 16 year old kid that goes to a boarding school in Ohio haha ha! No not Ohio, in the UK

A: T, what happened to dark artist now?

MT: Dark artist is the superhero. What are your superpowers?

T: my superpower is the ability to use my **imagination** to create inanimate objects or creatures. But if creation is too out of control, everything will technically go on a rampage and the creation won't listen to me.

MT: oh!

T: Yea so let's say like, uhm, this like super **powerful** God-like thing that has superpower. It's can technically go rouge and not listen to you.

MT: okay, okay. And do you have a **fatal flaw**?

T: **Peanuteous cry**. Like the word comes from peanuts and it smells like it with crystals. When someone gets touched by it, it's hazardous and can basically kill you

M: Whoah!

MT: So that can take away your superpowers?

T: Yes they can actually kill you.

MT: Okay, is there a villain in your world?

T: **Cringe kid**. That's one of my creations. He was originally **my sidekick** but he became rogue.

MT: So why is he a villain, why are you trying to stop him?

T: uhm the main reason is because he is trying to bring back old memes that were too cringy

MT: Hahaha! (Group laughs)

T: he wants to take those cringy memes and gather them and turn them into reality and I need to stop him.

MT: Okay and your theme song?

T: Uhm I don't have one but when it begins, the opening scene is me opening a portal

MT: Yes, please show us. Is there no theme song

T: For now but it goes like this (demonstrates twisting hands, standing with heroic stance). So sometimes I switch off people's minds or their electricity to frustrate people and reset them. And every episode is another portal to another part

MT: Okay thank you, dark artist. Would you guys like to ask him anything?

A: no it's like just perfect!

M: yea, he's a real dark artist

MT: haha ha, yea, switching off our power and all

Okay A, you can hit it

A: so I am Monkey black

Group laughs

MT: Hi monkey black, where do you come from?

A: I come from the hood (the ghetto or township)

MT: From the hood? Okay

T: How did you become a superhero?

MT: Do you have a family?

A: We've **been stuck in the hood** for a year

But we made money from me being a superhero

M: haha ha, come on dude! That's just **billionaire power**

Group laughs

MT: Maybe he's a **rich** superhero? Like an iron man or batman?

T: But how when he's from the hood?

A: hahaha! Okay let me explain how I became a superhero.

MT: yes, please tell us

A: I got bitten by a radioactive monkey, it got like that from drinking **unhealthy water**

MT: okay and it bit you. How did it bite you?

A: I went to camp in the jungle.

MT: You were going to camp in the jungle and then you came across the radioactive monkey that bit you?

A: yes

MT: And so that gave you superpowers, which are?

A: I can do anything that no one can do but **10 times better**. I can hang on trees for 10 times longer

MT: Okay and what does your costume look like

T: hahaha like a massive monkey suit?

A: haha ha not a massive monkey suit and stuff, **I am a black monkey**

MT: Are you **super big, super-size**?

A: No, I'm the same size. To normal people, I look like a monkey

MT: Do you have a **secret identity**?

A: I have a secret identity because I know some white people would be racist

MT: Because you know that some white people would be racist?

N: That sounds racist in itself

M: hahaha yea that's like a racist stereotype

MT: So then what is your other identity?

A: Yes, then I am A. I am me.

MT: Okay where does A stay and when does monkey black appear?

A: In the dark, dark places. When there's load shedding, people's basements.

MT: Okay and when monkey black appears, what does he do? What is he fighting? Who is the villain in your world?

A: An albino monkey!

N: What!

A: A white monkey, like King Kong, but he's white. But it's albino

MT: Okay, it's an albino monkey?

M: Like a gorilla from that movie?

MT: Cool and then?

A: My fatal flaw. I don't have one but when the albino monkey appears I divide into two and lose my intelligence and that's why I have to fight him

MT: okay and the theme song?

A: it's donkey kong

MT: is there a song I can play for you

A: no, I can just show you his moves and powers. I am now A, when I stand in the dark, my body transforms and this is how I look as monkey black.

As he wants to return to his seat, T accidentally pulls it back and A falls.

When he stands, he approaches T and proceeds to physically fight with him.

MT makes an effort to intervene and stop the altercation

MT: wait wait wait A, wait wait, please let's not fight. Please let's not fight T.

A sits in his seat, physically and emotionally upset

MT: I am so sorry about the chair

T: **it was an accident bro.** I'm so sorry about the chair. I'm sorry

MT: sorry A, **I'm really sorry about that**

T turns his body to him to physically show his empathy towards him. He attempts to touch A's shoulder, who brushes him off

T: I'm sorry.

N:**can I go now?**

MT: Let's wait a moment. I think we need to give A a moment. A can I suggest that you go to the bathroom? Take a moment to breathe, maybe drink some water as well. Do you have water with you? Or maybe I can offer you some. A....?

A continues to profusely cry in silence and tension in his breathing

MT: okay guys, let's all take a five minute break. Let's all take a moment away, go be with yourselves and come back in 5 minutes

T: **I'm really sorry man,** it was not my intention to hurt you. Sorry

The participants leave the room and A remains behind with the MT

MT: I'm so sorry about the A

MT moves closer to sit next to him. She gestures for a hug.

MT: It's okay. It's okay. Take **a deep breath, breathe with me.** Try and breathe Yes... **It's okay.**

A begins to gradually calm down.

MT: do you have some water in your bag? Or can offer you some?

A: no ma'am

MT: okay but please do go outside or to the bathroom. Breathe in the fresh air from outside and come back when you're feeling ready again

A: okay L

MT: I'm really sorry about what happened. I really don't think that T meant to hurt you. I honestly believe he was playing with you, like everyone does. You were all laughing now with each other. You share a lot of banter and I think that's what was happening. Talk to me if you need to okay? We are alone, so if you need to, talk to me. When you feel ready, take a walk outside, breathe that fresh air and then come back.

A: Okay L, thank you.

After a short while, A gathers strength to go outside and the participants come back to the room one by one.

MT: Okay. We're back again. A, do you feel like you can be here with us, would you like to be here?

A: Nods his head

MT: Would you guys like us to carry on, or would you like to carry on next week? Can we go on?

M: Yes I want to but I don't know if they feel like they can. There's a bad atmosphere

MT: aha, should we talk about that T?

T: yes, I want us to be here together. It was really an accident, like when I wanted to push the chair back, I was a bit too late. I'm really sorry A.

MT: Thank you T. A? Would you like to carry on?...A? So, there is something we can think about it general right, when things like this do happen. We're all friends. I hope you now see me as a friend. But we're friends, and sometimes we laugh and we get along, and things are going well and sometimes it's not going great, you may do something that hurts my feelings and I don't like it. We have to validate the person when they feel that way. At the moment, that person is A, and we can validate that he is not feeling great at the moment. And it's okay, maybe he's feeling hurt, maybe he was upset. Even though T didn't mean it and it wasn't intentional, our feelings still matter. No one can take away the way that person feels. It happens a lot in life where I might hurt you and I might want to take away how you feel right, and that isn't okay. Do you guys agree? Have you experienced that before, where someone did that to you

M: Yeah I have and it's very frustrating because the person thinks that they know how you feel

N: yea I have but I don't think it's on purpose, I think **sometimes people just don't know how** to say sorry or face it.

T: yea

M: yea like maybe they don't always realise it

MT: yea. T, **thank you for acknowledging that and apologising** to A. A, I hope you can find it in you to accept T's apology

If you want to carry on next week, that's okay, maybe we need the moment. If you want to carry on today, I am still here. You can maybe talk about it amongst yourself a

N loudly clears his throat

MT: N, what are you thinking?

N: I feel **like we should continue**

M: Yeah and **we can see how we feel as we go**

T: I would like to continue as well, **I don't want to leave** **because we matter here**, even if it doesn't **feel great now**

MT: Yea. A?...okay although we want to continue, I think it's probably best not to

A: no L! **Let's continue!**

MT: are you sure A? Are you going to feel like you can be here? How are you feeling right now? ... okay so I will see you guys again on Tuesday.

A: no L! It's fine!

MT: okay, but I need to know how you are, or what you're feeling. I don't want you to be uncomfortable A.

A: okay L

MT: so I need to know how you are. I think I can speak for the group when I say we want you here, we want you to be a part of us, so, if you aren't feeling great right now, it's okay, we can meet next week again

A: no **it's fine ma'am**, I'm okay.

MT: okay, so how can we validate our friend right now

N: we could maybe do an activity A enjoys most here.

M: Yea I like that

MT: okay A is there something you enjoy most and we can share that with you?

A: no they can decide.

MT: okay I think let's meet on Tuesday again.

T: what if we play music together

N: do we have enough time to wait?

MT: well I don't think....

A: I don't think we should stop L because we don't have time

MT: That doesn't really matter. I want us to be all here. Time is not the most important part. This is not my group, it's our group, I want us to be together, happy, or even when it's difficult... I'm here, we're all here for each other.....okay boys have a good afternoon and I'll see you on Tuesday again and please take care of each other.

A: No L, let's not stop, I want us to carry on

MT: That's fine but I will need you to come back in the space then. I will need you to turn your chair to us again, to put your phone away....

A: Okay L I'm done.

MT: Okay N you start and tell us about your superhero name.

N: Okay so my superhero has an accent

MT: Mmm okay, can you come a little bit closer, M can you turn your chair more into the circle? So your superhero name is?

N: It's realism

MT: Realism, okay

N: and this is my accent (manipulates voice)

M: oh! From where?

N: I come from **Japan**, the central city of Oratakoraku.

MT: How did you become a superhero?

N: so firstly I died from art block. While sitting at my desk. My 42 square meter room, which is ten thousand years old, I **died from artblock** but got rebooted. My powers are my **last memory**.

MT: Mmmm what's your family background

N: my family was very rich, and they lived in Oratakoraku, which is the highest country of value in all of Japan. The richest people live there, and I lived in the richest neighbourhood and my family buys me everything, everything. My room costs ten million yen.

MT: okay, cool. What does your costume look like?

N: it's a **white tight suit, with colourful spots**

MT: a white tight suit, with colourful spots?

N: like a superhero and villain with coloured spots

MT: do you have a **secret identity** or are you just realism

N: I keep my secrets. Yea, I keep my identity a secret because no one knows I'm alive yet. **Remember, died?**

M: and now you're alive

N: yea it's between the 4 of us

MT: okay, and your superpowers, what are you able to do?

N: so I have two super variants. So the first one is that I'm able to **create anything from my imagination**, and I can enter any screen or device and interpret it to my liking. So I could enter that **tv** (there is a tv standing behind the Music therapist). When it plays Teen Titan Go, I can jump in and change all the events in the show.

T: what!

N: yes dark artist.

T: it sounds like your costume looks like mine!

MT: maybe you could be like **lost brothers**

M: Haha ha, what L?

MT: Yea, cause T said you didn't know where you family was and you were raised by some guy who you thought was your uncle. So maybe you guys are like lost brothers

A: haha ha, true, true!

N: Hmmm, maybe... my flaw is **artblock**

MT: oh, what does artblock do to you?

N: it limits my imagination, and limits the spaces and devices I can go into. I could maybe only create a quarter of a tower, instead of the whole thing if I'm struck by **artblock**. It can limit how big the device is that I can go into.

MT:ohhhh okay..

M: what if you were already in a **tv** at the time but then **artblock** hits you?

MT: yea that's a good question.

T: technically if he was in a tv, then he could move into a phone, therefore he enters into another realm, which continues onwards. It's infinite

MT: Maybe? Hmm. But on what M is saying, what then, how would you recover?

N: I would need to wait it out, **rest** and try to **draw** and be **creative** to refuel and get strong again. But then there's also burnout, which comes from over-drawing. So I can't draw too much.

MT: how would you stop the **burnout**?

N: you can't. I need to be careful

MT: okay I'm curious then about how you stay replenished, so you don't burnout but stay strong

N: I need to prioritize rest and make sure that I rest in between the realms, getting exposed to artblock and when I stay creative to replenish.

MT: okay, and the villain? Is there one?

N: yes. The villain is mind-eraser.

MT: mind-eraser?

M: like an eraser

MT: is it giant?

M: with a brain

MT: yea? Just walking around erasing peoples minds?

N: it's like a big...white person. Very big and built up. His power...he's big and buff, he can just grab people and erase their minds.

MT: so you're trying to fight him?

N: No, I'm running away from him, he's trying to catch me, to stop creativity and memories and I'm very strong

T: and I'd he erases your memory and imagination, then?

N: I'll be useless

T: ohh

MT: How does the theme song go

N: Maybe 'Baby don't hurt me' Haha ha maybe let me think. Like the Teen Titans songs

T: no no, copyright!

MT: maybe that's his song? We writing the story now.

N comes to MT to look for song on steaming devise and plays Duck tales theme and dances around the room.

MT: okay, thanks Realism. Last, but not least, M!

M: I'm ready

N: haha ha, no you're not

MT: go for it fella! What is your name?

M: my name is gash! Like a wound

MT: like a wound? Okay, where do you come from?

M: like a gash from a sword.

MT: oh, and where do you come from?

M: from the peaceful remote village, in the mountains of Japan.

MT: okay and uhm what's your family background?

M: well we're a family of monks

MT: and how did you become a superhero?

M: I reached full spiritual enlightenment. I unlocked all my chakras and then I got my superpowers.

MT: yeah, yeah, yeah. And the costume?

M: it's a cybernetic red shirt with white baggy pants.

MT: almost like your monk pants?

M: No, he's already left the monks.

MT: do you have two identities, three, or one.

M: Yes, two, he's a superhero but he doesn't have a name. The fans can think of one. His name is Bob

MT: and what does Bob do?

M: Uhm he's a friendly neighbourhood Japanese superhero.

(Group breaks out into laughter) He casually stop's earthquakes and helps with the crime rate.

N: I have a question.

T: Me too

MT: yea N

N: why was he involved with monks?

M: he was raised there

A: and the chakras

M: he fully unlocked them.

T: is he bald

M: no because he left the monks and now he grew all his hair back. But he's homeless?

MT: like Hancock?

A laughs

M: yes, **he's a loner**, **the world is his home.**

MT: okay and the superpowers?

M: he can summon spirits and talk to people in the spirit world

MT: a bit like a **sangoma**

M: yes, exactly! He can basically **also kill ghosts** and stuff.

MT: so why do the Japanese people need gash?

M: Because they have a lot of **yoh-ki**, which is like a lot of **dead spirits**

MT: so he slays them?

T: but how do you slay something that is already dead?

M: They have been reincarnated into spiritual beasts, so I need to get rid of them.

MT: and gashes **fatal flaw?**

M: basically he's allergic to sleep

A: does he ever feel tired

M: no

N: does need sleep

M: no, because he's a spirit

A: so he's allergic to sleep but doesn't need it?

MT: does he feel itchy if he is around people who are sleeping

M: Uhhmm no, he just feels a bit tired. He can get tired but doesn't sleep.

MT: okay. And then does he have a villain.

M: Yes, it's an abbreviation. FART; fabulous, artificial, robotic terminator

MT: okay tell me more

M: he was built by the Japanese government because the like yoh-ki and chaos that it causes

N: it's corrupt

M: yes, they want to channel the yoh-ki into the robots to cause more chaos.

MT: and what about a theme song, does Gash have one?

M: yes he does, it's Shinji's theme. He doesn't do anything, he just meditates.

MT plays song and M presents himself as if meditating.

The group laughs together.

MT: okay, so what does Gash, Realism, Dark Artist and Monkey Black have to do with you? (group embarrassingly laughs) it's interesting, it came from your imagination, and has a part to do with you, maybe the background, the family c fatal flaws, the strengthening

T: My character does have things that resemble me, like my creativity and my imagination. Dark artist is a bowling name a used when I went to a friends birthday party. Haha ha so I just used that. But I do like art, I see myself as an artist. And dark, maybe my skin colour, I'm black. I'm also allergic to peanuts

M: that part I knew! I know you're allergic to peanuts

MT: Hmm. A?

A: I said monkey cause I like monkeys, they're my favourite animals. I'd love to see them everyday.

T: haha ha that's hard to believe. Don't you see them everyday.

N: T, are you looking at your reflection? (group laughs together)

A: I said black, because I am black. It's also my Roblox name.

MT: okay that's cool. And Realism?

N: Realism is the real life. We are here today, sitting now, watching each other. So I interpret the real of this work into art and my imagination is real and I am real. I go into the tv and I lose that, I become the art style of that show and lose my power. It's not real, it's just a show on tv

T: can you jump into painting, or the ground

MT: he said devices, right?

N: Yes it has to be something with moving frames, that flow. What else can I say?... art is a realistic form. People think art is weird and not a real job, but I change that by interpreting it into something real that they can see.

MT: okay, that's cool. And M, do you want to say how Gash relates to M? A likeness or unlikeness to M

M: So basically Gash is like a super edgy cool guy who is buff and tall. He has a full beard and a deep voice. He's very cool like me. He's good with people and great with women.

MT: okay that's cool. If we can backtrack to our discussion of you as becoming men, do these characters represent that journey of you becoming men?

M: no

N: kind of

A: no.

MT: what does your character have to do with your masculinity? M you describe Gash a lot and how he looks

T: with Dark artist, since he's 16 years old, he still has to grow up as a man and stop being childish. At the last episode of the show, it will show how Dark artist will correct all the wrongs while he has coffee looking out the window. I want to stop playing pranks on people, to move a ways from being so much of a child and holding grudges.

MT: hmmm that's interesting. What about you A, what does monkey black have to do with your masculinity?

A: Monkey black **has nothing to do with my masculinity**. We'll just see.

MT: okay. And N, what about realism?

N: mine has to do with realising that the world is the world, and living an a real way.

MT: Mhmmm and M?

M: Uhm he doesn't really symbolise much...he symbolises my growth.

MT: okay, for our next session, please draw me a symbol of this character. It can be anything shape or form. Let's talk about writing a song....

Analysis of session 6:

Keywords: Superheroes, superpowers, secret identity, real identity, fatal flaws, villains, brotherhood, emotions, growth, maturity.

In the previous session, the music therapist asked participants to prepare detailed information about what kind of character they would be if they were superheroes. In this session, the music therapist invited the participants to share stories about their superhero characters. The participants shared banter and asked each other valuable questions as these stories were being told.

One participant slipped and fell as the other participant pulled away his chair in a playful manner. Participant A felt embarrassed and angered by this and he and Participant T broke out into a physical fight, which the therapist had to break. Participant T apologized and the music therapist used the situation to ask the two participants involved, as well as the other two, how conflict can be managed, and how people can validate each other's feelings. Participants T, N, and M showed empathy towards Participant A and had an open discussion with the music therapist regarding the incident that just occurred, and how people can validate feelings in general. The participants showed commitment to the group and music therapy process by insisting that the session could continue despite the fact that there was conflict.

The stories about their superhero characters revealed information about their fear, hope, and aspirations. The use of fiction as a tool gave way for the participants to be explorative, and imaginative, and they could embody their fictional characters in an active manner.

Session 7 (13 June 2023):

Time: 14:00

MT: so boys can we take a moment to step outside and just be with yourself. Think of and find a symbol that best represents your journey so far on your thoughts of a becoming man

A: I took a picture of stairs, which symbolises my growth. I am growing. And it's hard, like some steps might be easier and some are hard but they help with growing

MT: nice

T: can I go L

MT: yes

T: okay, I have my pencil. It represents me, like, as an artist. That's what's gonna help me become the man I see myself as and how I will be.

MT: okay, N and M?

N: Uhm, I have a bottle of water. Which represents the growth to becoming a man. The bottle resembles my body, here is the head and here is my body. Does it look full or empty?

MT: at the moment it looks full?

M and T: yea

A: to me it looks empty.

N: Yea, let's say it's looks empty. I need to be filled up to reach my manhood. When you open the bottle, there's water.

MT: what does the water symbolise

N: it represents the path, the level I am now, so this is my mentality close to the head, the water. I want to get there and grow and be that man, drop by drop, sip by sip. When it's fully empty, I will be a man.

A: wait, so when the water goes down you're a man?

MT: yea, here is the power of analogy right. Symbolism is all about how we see things and interpret them. For example, if someone saw your picture, they may just see stairs, until they hear how you explain and

what it means for you. We may see a bottle with water, but in this process, N saw the bottle and it resonated with the way he sees his journey of becoming, right.

A: Yes L, I didn't really think of it that way.

MT: stories. What about you M?

N: the living legend himself!

M: this is my school bag. So my symbol represents me, it looks very fine, and it's filled with knowledge. It has so much variety, yea... like I'm not a neat person and it shows...but I am very different, I have a lot of books, other people may have other books. I am different from other people and I'm unique.

MT: nice! I like that M. So I want to ask you one more thing that I didn't ask before....I want each of you to tell me something about you that I didn't know. I can also share something that you don't know about me. T, would you like to start the circle?

T: yes, I am studying anatomy.

M: I am very immature.

MT: okay, A?

A: do you want option 1 bad or option 2 or good.

MT: any, let's hear it

A: Okay uhm... hahaha I don't like homosexuals!

N: Whoa? What happened to loving your neighbour as you love yourself?

T: Yes

A: Well you guys need to teach me that mentality

MT: okay, I'd like for us to get back to that one, option 2.

A: okay option 2....haha ha, I don't really have one.

MT: is it me or is A the biggest jokester haha ha.

T: the biggest L, like he made us wait haha ha.

MT: So with **homosexuality**, we may not always agree with people's lifestyles or understand it, but we still have to respect people and accept the decisions and choices they make over their lives. When we don't understand something, a good place to start is to ask them respectfully so that we don't judge them or make the wrong assumptions about them, right.

MT: okay and what about you N?

N: I have a fake tooth, did you ever notice?

MT: oh where?

N: here (points to the front tooth) haha ha, so I when I was little, I was playing with my brother and then he tripped me and my mouth was bleeding and my tooth broke. So, he freaked out and said I shouldn't tell mom and dad but my mom saw it anyways and then took me to the dentist.

MT: yea, okay. Thank you, I'm glad to know about you. So, I'd like us to play the drums and let's improvise together.

After the improvisation, the group did a process of looking at emotion cards. The activity involved participants placing the words in spaces between 'good' and 'bad' and the MT asked questions about what the words meant to them the positions they placed the words.

Words they looked at were the following: Embarrassed, angry, grumpy, confused, scared, shy, pensive, bored, proud, lonely, stressed, disgusted, calm, frustrated, enamored, brae, disappointed, happy, tired, anxious, sad, excited, confident, and guilt.

Analysis and artwork in session 7:

Key words:

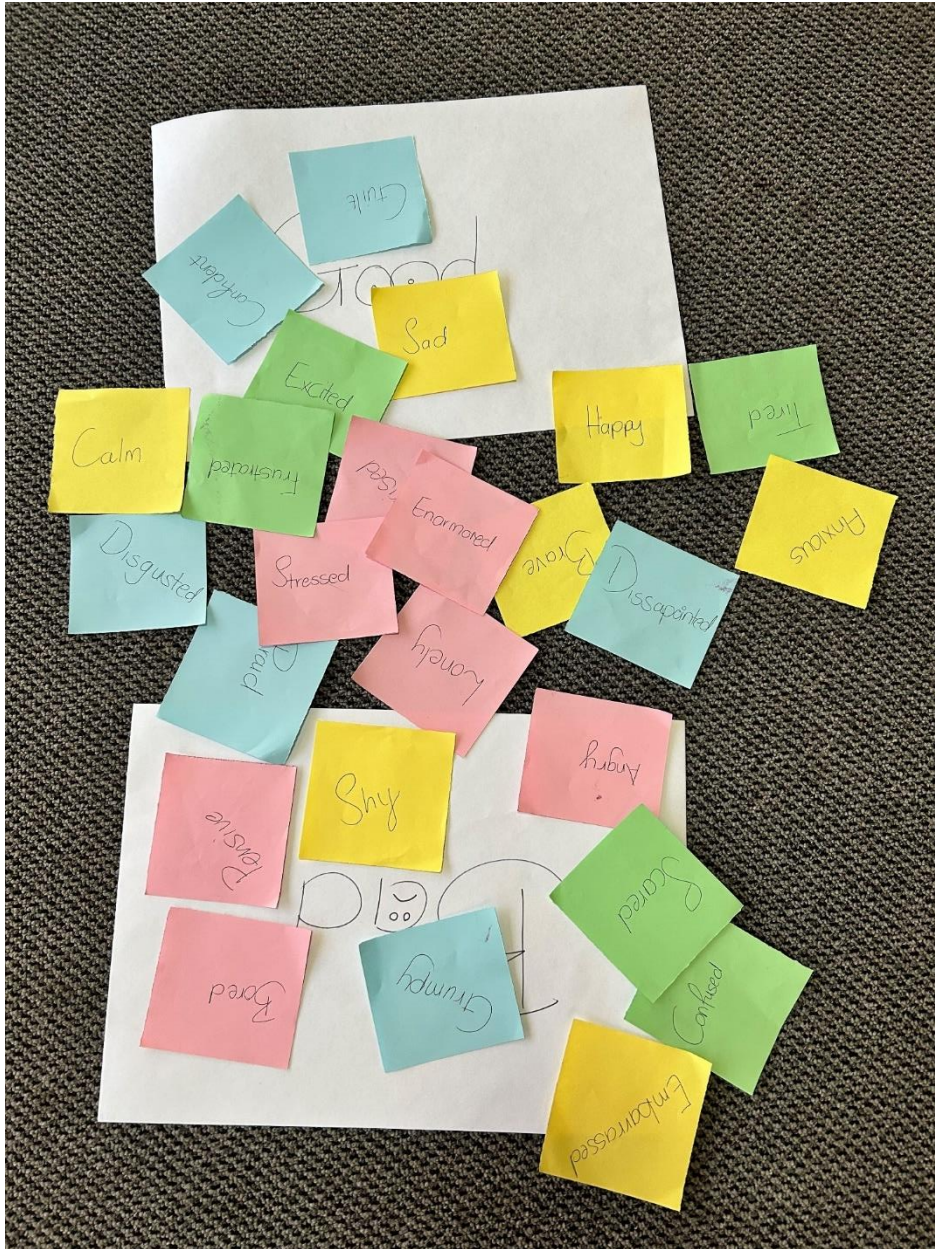
Symbolism, growth, becoming men, self-identity, good emotions, bad emotions

Analysis:

At this late stage of the music therapy process, the group was cohesive and this could be seen in their drumming improvisation. The music therapist asked group members to share interesting facts about themselves that the therapist does not know yet. Participant A expressed his dislike for people who are homosexual. While this caused slight tension in the room, the music therapist highlighted the importance of empathy and respect for others. Group members were more vulnerable and open to hearing one another, openly sharing with the therapist and reflecting on their growth process individually. The music

therapist invited the participants to take an in-depth look at emotions and which ones may be considered as good and which as bad.

Words they looked at were the following: Embarrassed, angry, grumpy, confused, scared, shy, pensive, bored, proud, lonely, stressed, disgusted, calm, frustrated, enamoured, brae, disappointed, happy, tired, anxious, sad, excited, confident, and guilt. Each participant was offered space to place the emotions cards in the position they saw fit on the posters with 'good' and 'bad', and further explain why they have positioned it that way. The activity offered the therapist insight into their world views, as well as their views of emotional expression and appropriate ways of expressing emotions. The activity fostered the development of the therapeutic relationship between the participants and the therapist.



Session 8 (15 June 2023)

Semi-structured interviews

Participant A:

MT: Okay so, I just want to ask you, what was **music therapy like for you?**

A: Uhm, it was **pretty nice**, definitely different from normal therapies, because we do a variety of therapies, because we do a variety of things instead of just uhm, talking about our feelings and then, just go home.

MT: Mhm

A: Yeah, but it was pretty enjoyable because I got to experience it with my friends and you know...

MT: Okay, and then how would you describe your own story of being a teenager, who's becoming a man? We spoke a lot about that for the while that we were doing music therapy. I'm interested to hear, how would you describe that?

A: Uhm, I'd say that.... I don't really feel like I'm becoming a man mostly because I'm still very childish right now.

MT: Okay, that's fine

A: But I think that I am going to become a man, eventually. So, I would describe me becoming a man as like...taking steps or going upstairs

MT: Mhmm yea I remember the stairs.

A: Yea and there's probably going to be like one large stair that represents my transition into manhood

MT: Okay so kind of like a leap into that stage?

A: Yes, and I do feel like I'm going to have to go through something, or I don't feel like I will truly feel like a man if I don't go through something.... like an initiation

Mt: Can you think of something that you would describe as like, I don't know, like a rite of passage or an experience that would help you transition into that phase?

A: Uhm, maybe...trying to do something that would help me get over my fears, or... do things that would help me like...think more...like try not be funny all the time, like try to think more.... strategically in a way.

Mt: Okay, uhm so if you think about everything that we've been through and everything that we did, and we were to describe it as a story...so if I started the story by saying: "there was once a boy called A who joined a music group to explore emotions and what it means to be a man" how would you carry on that story? What was it like for A? How did that story play out for him

A: Uhm, I was pretty nervous when I first came

Mt: Okay

A...because I thought this was just going to be the same type of therapy. Initially, I came because I like music and also my friends were coming, so I decided, why not come, so then I came, first time I came kinda nervous..., but then I grew into it and because I started feeling more like, it's just a.... fun thing I can do after school. I didn't really think of it as an extramural, or like it was required. I felt like it was like "if you want to, you can do it"

MT: So, it was voluntary? Not compulsory. Did that change the way you perceived it, like "if I don't want to come to music therapy, I don't have to, if I do? I can?"

A: yea, that did because I was like, it's not like I'm gonna get a demerit or I'm forced to go that. I can come if I want to, it won't really affect what happens.

MT: And when you came, did you have any expectation of what music therapy could do for you? Never mind your friends, or me. Did you think to yourself "I hope that by coming here, I'm gonna get this...?"

A: Uhm, no. I thought we would listen to music the entire time. I didn't think we would play it that way and get to do art. I was expecting that you would play us music the whole time and we would just have fun.

MT: Okay. We can think of emotions as part of our stories, or our lives right? Remember I asked you about emotions and whether they are a good or bad thing and whether they get in the way.

A: Yea

MT: what was it like for you to talk about emotions and express them in sessions?

A: Uhm, it was pretty weird....to be honest, I wasn't really raised in a masculine household. But the schools I went to were masculine, so I wasn't used to actually talking about emotions. I'm more used to talking about soccer, games and stuff like that. I wasn't always sure what to say. I was always thinking of what type of emotions would describe my emotions nicely.

MT: Mmmm. Have your thoughts or feelings changed about the importance or lack of the importance of emotions?

A: Everything does have a downside, so sometimes emotions can get in the way. Emotions cause bias, let's say I feel....my parents are fighting in a divorce, and I choose which parent I want to pick, depending on the feelings I have for them like maybe my mom always bought me stuff and my dad would always straight up make me happy without buying stuff, then when they fight, I would have to pick between the two. If I didn't have emotions, maybe I could make a proper decision that wouldn't affect my feelings. Let's say my dad's car broke down and my mom doesn't want to help my dad, then I'd pick my dad in that scenario. Or let's say in the morning, my dad hit me, then I'd probably pick my mom.

MT: Okay, that's cool.

A: that's why I feel like emotions can get in the way, but they can also be useful because if I'm in a situation where like....I want to feel sad, but maybe I don't really know how to use them or openly express them, I could make my sadness look like anger. Instead, like grieving someone who recently died, I would rather be angry, than sad.

MT: Yes, because that would be appropriate to respond like that?

A: Yes

MT: do you one day when you are a manic would it appropriate for you to express emotions...?

A: Yes, I think it would because let's say one day I do get children, I would want my children to also be able to use their emotions, but I also want them to not get hurt, easily.

MT: Yea. So who can you express emotions with? Your friends, or future partner? Or who

A: I think like my children. I want them to see that I'm not perfect. I don't want them to think...like be like my dad who never looks sad and is always thinking. Children look up to you and they'll want to be like you. I prefer to cry in front of my kids, not that I want to, but like....I don't want to avoid my kids when I'm crying. I going to like...cry. They can feel sympathy towards me and see that it's okay to cry in front of your kids

MT: Okay, cool. Is there anything else you want to share about the process, something you enjoyed about the music therapy process

A: Honestly I don't know, I'm probably going to remember a lot of things we did here, but I can't of a specific thing that were so important. I really enjoyed playing music and drawing and a lot of things.

MT: Thank you A.

A: Thank you L.

MT: Hello M

M: Hello L

MT: so let's start it with something easy. if we think of everything we did together in the group, the music we played, drawings we did and all the discussions we had and were to think of the story of M. *"There was once a boy called M, who joined a music therapy group to explore emotions, what it means to be a man"*, how would that story carry on?

M: uhmmm, I would just carry on living and **life will turn me into a man**

MT: Aha. Is there anything that life is gonna do to you, to help you become that man?

M: Uhm, maybe. It **might toughen me up, teach me new things and make me wiser**

MT: okay, and have your perceptions about yourself as a teenager now who is becoming a man, have your perceptions about you changed through everything we did together?

M: No, because I still have the same view

MT: Has it maybe expanded in a way?

M: Yes, **doing this got** me to think about it more

MT: Okay. We spoke a bit about emotions and sometimes I would ask you guys how you feel. What was that like, sharing your feelings in front of your friends, and in this group setting

M: Uhm, **it felt new but I felt okay** **because I know them and I can trust them**

MT: And in front of me, because I came in as a stranger?

M: Yea, but I know I can trust a therapist

MT: oh. Is it because I'm a therapist or because of other things?

M: Well before I had to trust you because you are a therapist, but now I trust you based on what I know

MT: Mmmm. One day when you are a man, or now as you're becoming a man. You've got your dad, brothers, I don't know if you have uncles and grandfathers? Guy friends...do you think it's appropriate for men to express their emotions?

M: yes! No one should not express their emotions

MT: And when is it appropriate or with who? Are there certain people you shouldn't share your emotions with

M: yes, you should share them with someone you trust because other people can use them against you. I don't know...some of your enemies.

MT: or girls maybe?

M: Yea, uhm maybe, because I do share my emotions with my mom. But it depends on the girl.

MT: okay. What was music therapy in general like for you, let's say someone asked you, what would you say?

M: It was like an experience. We listened to music, we would draw, we meditated, it was a calm environment that I could let myself go, I could express myself in, uhmmm...without anyone thinking negatively of me.

MT: and do you feel like you were a different person here than what you are outside of the room?

M: no, not really, I do trust the people here, so I would be able to tell them things that I can't tell other people.

MT: Mmmm, and have your perceptions of yourself changed in anyway through doing what we have done? What do you think of M now after doing music with your friends and the therapist?

M: I just realised that I am becoming a man, I'm going to become a man one day. Before this I didn't really think about it.

MT: Yea, and did any of those thoughts make you feel strange?

M: Not really, but I did ask myself: "when will it happen?"

MT: okay that's cool M, thanks

M: Oh! Thank you L

MT: Mr Realism

N: Mhmmm

MT: haha ha, how are you?

N: Im good and you.

MT: I'm fine. So let's starts off by thinking of the story of N. if we think of everything we did together in the group, the music we played, drawings we did and all the discussions we had and were to think of the story of M. *"There was once a boy called N, who joined a music therapy group to explore emotions, what it means to be a man"*, how would that story carry on?

N: so after this? I'd say, hmmm...how would I be?....I would say, my life would be kind of the same, but I'll think more about my emotions throughout the days and see if it was good or bad.

MT: speaking about, thinking about your emotions, what was it like sharing it in a group setting, feeling feelings, talking about feelings. What was that experience like for you

N: I would say...it was different because you're **talking about your feelings** with your friends, people you know, so it's different

MT: and with the therapist?

N: I had to get used to that at first, yeah. **And then it kind of got normal**

MT: do you think that normal feeling can be felt when you're outside of the room? Or is that a feeling you can only feel here

N: I'd say it's an experience here

MT: Mmmm. So, now as you are becoming a man, do you think it's appropriate to express feelings as a man, or is it inappropriate?

N: I'd say it's appropriate.

MT: with who?

N: You should do it with your family, people that are close to you and tell them what's wrong.

MT: Yea. Is there any point in time where emotions can get in the way? Or are they helpful?

N: Hmm...sometimes emotions can get in the way cause...people don't know how to express them properly. So people express emotions differently. Like if you get mad at a test, you could tear up the test, do something bad to the test, say something bad to the teacher or argue with the teacher.

MT: okay. Uhm, do you see yourself as a man who's gonna express himself

N: Yea...I think so, if I'm in the right...if I have the right friends and people around me. It's a maybe-maybe kind of thing.

MT: Maybe-maybe?

N: Yea

MT: what was your general experience of Music therapy?

N: I think it was fun.

MT: like if you were to write a review

N: Review, uhm I'd rate it five stars!

MT: Five star. Out of five or out of ten?

N: Five. Being with my friends in the process was fun. It was a great thing to do after school

MT: did any of it feel like therapy for you? Do you feel like something has changed in you in any way? Your perceptions of things?

N: it didn't feel like therapy, but my understanding of emotions changed a little bit.

MT: and of yourself, as a person who is becoming a man. Did anything change, or expand

N: I don't think so.

MT: okay thank you N. That's cool.

T: sorry I'm late L!

MT: T, the thunder! That's okay, we can start with our chat. How are you? Are you okay?

T: good

MT: how was school today

T: haha ha, kind of boring. Then at the end of the day, what I was doing now, the gaming. That was honestly one of the highlights of my day actually.

MT: cool!

T: but I lost, like badly! Haha ha, but it was so much fun!

MT: I'm glad there's still ways that we can still see highlights in our day, even if something bad happens earlier...there is still something good about it.

T: yea...definitely

MT: So, let's talk about a story.

T: Okay.

MT: *"A story about a boy whose name is T, and T the boy came to music therapy sessions to explore his emotions and explore himself becoming a man"*. How does the story carry on?

T: hmmm... I really don't know. If I were him, I wouldn't worry too much about the future and to rather stay in the present. When you worry too much about the future, then nothing about your present will be nice

MT: okay, so is there something that T now, would like to say to his future self? That isn't here yet, he's becoming that guy. Is there something you could say to that guy now?

T: Stay focused.

MT: Mmm. Okay, so now that you were in this group with us, uhm, and we did the music, we did drawings and we talked about some stuff. How would you describe what you are like now that is a teenager who is becoming a man?

T: Sorry what's the question?

MT: Has T changed since coming to music therapy?

T: Yes!

MT: what's changed about him?

T: honestly....I would say, like **how I see the world I generally**, how I see myself from being a person who doesn't really show that much, or not really care, or bubbling up emotions certain emotions to a certain extent, **but now coming to music therapy...** **it's easier to express those emotions**

MT: is it easy to express then when we're here together, or do you feel like there an opening happening that you could be able to do that even when we leave the room

T: **it's opening up a little bit**

MT: has that expression changed for you at home as the oldest boy? Or between you and your father, or a cousin, anything like that

T: I'd say maybe like with my father

MT: Yea, do you feel like you can talk to him more?

T: Yea. I would usually do that with my mom, **not my dad and that's changing now**

MT: okay, and on the thing about feelings. Do they have value or do they get in the way? Is it okay to share?

MT: feelings is what makes us human, but society projects that males aren't supposed to express emotions, only when they are in their own space. It is good for men in general to share their emotions.

MT: Mmmm, okay. If we think about you T, who is becoming a man. If we take a moment to look into the future, do you feel like you'll be a man who expresses his emotions, or not and if not, why? With who? When is it okay to?

T: Hmmm...that's a difficult question. I feel like in the future I'd still share that with my man. Maybe instead of sharing it with my mom, I'll share it with my dad more

MT: Okay and your mom?

T: I guess she will also still know about what I'm thinking.

MT: okay, is there anything else you want to say about your general experience in our music therapy process

T: overall I loved coming to music therapy. Like most of the Tuesdays and Thursdays haven't really been great. But when I came to Music therapy....music therapy has just basically become the highlight of my day in general.

MT: do you wanna say why? Is there something specific, or?

T: it's just generally because my day usually goes the same, continuously being boring. Not much happening. But when I come to music therapy, it adds something different to everything else. It breaks the cycle

MT: and has your friendship changed?

N: Yea.

MT: in what ways?

N: It changed for the better I think. I'm some cases we know each other better than we originally did.

MT: so it's brought you guys closer together?

N: Yea

MT: and there's something about you guys experienced something together that no one else has. You've formed a memory that nobody else really shares. It's like a treasure you guys can keep.

N: Mmmm

MT: Cool, thank you T. You can tell the guys to come inside that we can start the session. (Sigh) I feel sad today.

T: Same! I really don't want music therapy to end.

(The other participants enter the room)

Appendix 11: Example of Thematic Analysis Process

What process was followed to get to this stage?

After having read the transcripts multiple times and identifying colour-codes, I colour coded all eight transcripts. I then printed this and I cut out all the colour coded words and then placed the research questions in different positions, like a map to begin thinking of key elements that arise from the transcript. Below is an example of this.

1. How do participants narrate their experiences of and ideas about masculinity?

Codes of Codes:

- S1: Strange Manning
- S2: More or Less, not yet
- S3: Dads cry, Society says not to
- S4: Experimenting, Exploring, Becoming
- S5: Becoming men, in your own pace, in your own time
- S6: Maturity is Mental and Physical
- S7: My becoming goes in stages, it's unique, it's heroic
- S8: In Unity, Separate and in Unity

I then took the same colour-coded words placed them in rows per session. Here is an example of that process.

Key Words:

Emotions	Boys/Men/ Masculinity	Music Therapy	Therapeutic relationship	Ambitions/ thoughts of future	Self- identity	Ambiguity	Friendship	Acts of pleasure or enjoyment	Symbo ls
----------	--------------------------	------------------	-----------------------------	-------------------------------------	-------------------	-----------	------------	-------------------------------------	-------------

Session 1:	sad, cold, more relaxed weird, eery, excited, confuse d, guarded faster. energeti c sighs heavily different confuse d scared ree		want you to take the drums, I want to do that again! I felt so engage d when it got faster nice beat) I didn't hear your voices A little slow	uhmmm sorry I was looking forward to seeing you I wanted to try hard to keep with your rhythm was so cool I felt part of it but all at once, together Okay Ma'am Can I go?			competin g			deep symbo l, waves turtle deep, waves turtle
------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	------------	--	--	---

Finally, I took out the colour-coded words that I felt were not relevant or did not have enough flesh (which could come back if necessary). I then tried to form category-titles.

I took a piece of paper with all 12 categories to mix-and-match them, to identify which ones go well together. With those that match, I then formed a sentence or line that could be useful in forming a theme.

Because of the mixing and matching process, I believed some of the tables could speak to two research questions at a time. While following these processes, I kept the research questions in mind. Below is an example of how I began to group and rearrange varying color-coded words to begin thinking of categories and the overarching themes. This process was followed multiple times. The tables below represent the initial before coming to the final table found in Chapter 4:

Theme: Participants relate masculinity to age and physical attributes		
<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Category: Age</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Category: Physical</td> </tr> </table>	Category: Age	Category: Physical
Category: Age	Category: Physical	

Codes: 18 and above 16, 17 and above	Codes: I'll be 10 times better, super big, super-sized
20,22	Seem strong
25 and above	He's tall, he's obviously grown, grown facial hair which symbolises his growth
Not buy kiddies meals	Very big and built up.
No, I can't imagine that right now, like men playing video games. Its has been such a huge part of my life	Big and buff, edgy cool guy who is buff and tall, has a full beard and a deep voice
	Men should be strong
	Body transforms

Theme: Participants views about masculinity are varied and include or centre around masculine behaviour in the future

Category: Behavioural	Category: Variety of views/ views of the future man/ becoming/ transitioning	Category: Direction about the future
Codes: I think I am still far too childish	Codes: Growth. The man I see myself as. I need to be filled up to reach my manhood.	Codes: For my future, I drew a dark space but the light is the bit of hope I have. I want to succeed.
You must stop being childish. I want to stop playing pranks on people	We're growing at different paces and different ways	The biggest thing I want is a happy job. Not unsatisfying I want to do what I love.
Throwing a tantrum. I must show those around me that I am responsible	I am different from other people and I'm unique but I'm very immature.	I don't know what's gonna happen in the future, I don't know how it's gonna go.
I want to be someone people want to hang out with	I want them to see that I'm not perfect (future children)	I have ambitions and dreams
Society does have like, ways they think men should act. We kind of act that way cause that's what we see.	Like be extroverted, honoured and respectable	It represents me, it looks very fine (art image)
So we end up thinking that that's how we should be	I'm a competitive person. I want to win most of the time	Becoming a man will make me wiser

He can be a man and still play video games	My transition into manhood I am becoming a man	I want to be strong, gym, smart, diet, have joy, care, be innocent
I feel that responsibility on me cause I'm the oldest	I don't feel like I will truly feel like a man if I don't go through something	Sometimes it's better to worry about the future now
He must be a provider	Initiation	I need to move past the bad stuff now.
I've never seen my dad cry	Yes, Grown. (Title given to image after sonic sketch)	
I spend a lot of time with my dad, always he's serious	When it's fully empty (bottle symbol) I will be a man	
He's good with people and great with women	Rites of passage	
Men in your lives say. My dad always says me and him are the men of the home	I don't really care about my height	
Yes, but also assertiveness and wisdom	I am getting a deeper understanding of myself and things I could improve on	
Boys don't show their emotions	But I also wanna be like my dad	
	I hope to be a cool guy some day	
	But overall, if men act one way, we develop and try to act the same way	
	I might be disappointed if I don't become that man	
	He can be as many things as he want to be, an artist, big and tall	
	I don't know exactly who I want to be, I have question marks	
	Growing up as a man has nothing to do with my masculinity	

I am still childish. I need to be
way more responsible

Lose certain mannerisms, like
making noises, or like fart
noises around people

I wouldn't consider myself
one (a man)

But some people are just
better than you

I didn't draw a face, I don't
know how I'll be

I'm not a man yet I'm
different....and same me

Growing up in a masculine
household. Like my dad who
never looks sad and is always
thinking

I don't really feel like a man
yet

This is I want to be, but I am
showing some sense of
wealth...

I want to be a business man

I hope to get a wife

Appendix 12: Musical Video Excerpts

Excerpt 1:

Session 1:

Session time: 17:34 - 22:00

The first excerpt is a basic drumming circle the therapist introduces by illustrating how the djembe drum is held and played for the fullness of sound.

After sharing with the group their individual feelings coming into the space, the therapist asks each individual to play their current feeling on the djembe drum, in a call-and-response sequence. Participant A asks to start and plays the drum with high energy and a basic beat. The group joins in after hearing the pattern but does not match his energy. Participant M comes in next with a slightly more complex rhythm but a steady calm beat, and the group consistently matches this energy and rhythm. The sequence ends on fast riffs, causing the group to struggle to keep to the rhythm, and the group playing fizzles out with a feeling of emptiness and expectation. Participant N plays a slow deep rhythm on the djembe drum which brings some grounding to the group. The other participants match his energy as he increases in volume and quickens in pace. M smiles at A and the group energy continues to build. M stops playing the sequences with a loud ending and calls for the group to end as well. The therapist gestures to T who begins playing a strange and difficult sequence to follow. The group joins in tentatively, and with a low volume because they feel unsure of T's rhythm. T then plays slowly and ends and the group stops playing as well.

The therapist invites the group to think about the way they came in feeling and how they are now feeling after having an opportunity to play the drums. She introduces group improvisation and says that she will begin a rhythm that the group can then follow, adding their own rhythms feeling the energy of the room, and going with the pace of the varying rhythms.

The therapist begins the improvisation with a loud mixture of deep and light tones. The group observes her as she plays the pattern about five times, engaging and deeply observing her before they gradually and tentatively join in. The therapist increases the volume and the group attempts to match her, playing

their own rhythms but maintaining a well-sequenced pace. This goes on for about a minute and a half before the therapist suddenly accelerates and quickens her rhythms. The group plays with confusion, begins looking at each other, and laughs. The participants attempted to match her energy, speed, and volume, which after some time they managed to do. The therapist continues at this pace and looks to each participant to continue with their contribution to the sound and there is great group cohesion. Finally, she suddenly slows down with a deep-toned sound, the group follows and gradually stops playing and she brings the sound to a stop.

She asks the group to reflect on what the improvisation was like for each of them.

Excerpt 2:

Session 5:

Session time: 07:06 - 15:51

After grounding participants through deep breathing, the therapist invites the group into a group improvisation with various instruments.

Participant N swiftly runs to the keyboard and T runs for the guitar. Participant A and M walked around the room for a short while looking at instruments while the therapist sat on the floor with a drum.

M sits in the corner with a maraca and participant A sits back in his chair with a djembe drum and tambourine.

T starts slowly playing single-string notes on the guitar, with a gentle sweet rhythm. N attempts to match his tone and volume on the keyboard and M comes in slowly swinging the maracas. The therapist introduces a calm low beat on the drum which A joins in with. The therapist starts to hum to the guitar and piano, holding the participants and encouraging them to begin confidently playing the two instruments. A begins to explore other rhythms and plays louder. M plays syncopated rhythms and increases his volume as well. N starts humming, adding deep sighs while the therapist continues to hum her rhythm. T becomes confident on the guitar and experiments with other sounds and there is an increase in group cohesion. T's energy grows and suddenly stands up and dances around the room as he plays. He laughs and says "This hurts your hands" and the group stops musicking together.

Excerpt 3:

Session 7:

28:13 - 35:43

The therapist invites any participant to offer a beat in the space and the rest of the group would improvise with them. Participants M, T, and N take hold of the djembe drums, and participant A takes the claves. The therapist takes a pair of maracas. T starts excitedly on the largest djembe drum and plays a deep, slow rhythm. M and N add syncopated beats and the therapist and participant A join in. The group synchronises and the leader, T then increases the volume and quickens. The group members show excitement on their faces and a strong sense of harmony and group musicking grows. T then suddenly changes the beat and brings the music to a stop and the group members laugh.

M says he will go and the other group members start making funny sounds with their mouths and laugh. M then starts on the djembe drum with a quick but steady rhythm which the group joins in with. M maintains this rhythm so there is cohesion and synchronicity but no change in the music quality. A drops the claves and takes a djembe and changes the rhythm to a chant-like sound. The group matches his high-stable energy with quick halts and replay. This goes on and the group then comes to a synchronised halt. The group looked around at each other and suddenly laughed together. The therapist gestures to N to offer the best which he does. Begins by knocking on his drum and then plays a fast-paced hip-hop rhythm on his drum. The group joins in but with varying rhythms. The therapist plays the maracas with her hands lifted up high and the group laughs and increases in their volume but maintains a steady pace. N continues the sequence a few more times before coming to a quick stop.

Excerpt 4:

Session 8:

After discussions with the participants, the therapist invites the group to compose a song that would reflect their feelings surrounding the music therapy process and their thoughts about becoming men and expressing their emotions.

All the participants go to the keyboard and T begins playing all sorts of keys. N then starts playing well-sequenced flat chords in the bass on the keyboard, forming the beat and rhythm of the song. The other participants listened for a few seconds before joining in. T plays next to N while A and M take hold of high notes in the treble. The therapist joins in on the djembe drum, playing very lightly to not impede the keyboard. The group members continue playing for a while and N begins sighing and humming. The therapist briefly hums along and then stops and N starts humming loudly. N starts to sing some lyrics and asks T to help him. T sings a short line and then gestures back to N to continue singing which he does for a while. He stops singing and changes the notes and the group follows him until he brings it back to the original rhythm. The group continued to play, changing the pace slightly and then playing louder. After a short while, they bring the volume down. And stop. A makes a few comments about the song sounding sad and N then starts playing the keyboard with the same notes but much faster and singing with a light manipulated voice. The other group members play along, giving the song a psychedelic sound. The group plays like this for a while, experimenting with the notes on the keyboard and they suddenly stop.

The therapist then invites them to reflect on the song-composing experience.

Lyrics of the song:

N: *Mmmm, yeah.....mmmm yeah.....mmmm yeah* (heavy sigh)

T: *Okay!*

N: *All the little children, yea we keep growing*

And I am, missing again

Ahhhhh (heavy sigh)

(Music intensifies)

Sobering from midnight cocaine, mmmm

Silly little kids lets, play with our hair mhm....mmmm

C'mon T, add a little bit of that yeah!

Every time!

Just stand up on your feet, yeah! Mhm

T: *Let's go! Let's go!*

N: *Mhm mmmm yeah*

T: *Let's go! Let's go!*

(Music intensifies further, T adds riffs on the keyboard, M and A play soprano notes with high-speed and excitement)

N: *When you trying something, just stomp on your feet like a man!*

If you sing a little bit,

I'll give you some more heat, yeah!

(N looks at the other participants, and A and M laugh)

N: *C'mon, we're growing into men*

We need your words

If you don't

You'll become a little birds

Yeah, mhm mmmm

T: *Okay!*

Here's my verse

I don't know what to say

Everything is broken

I don't know

So I'll pass it back to N

N: Mmmm

(MT hums with N)

Okay, today was a little bit psycho

Cause I don't really know where I might go

Or how I'll grow.

Let's hear from M, mhm mmmm

(M shakes his head. The music intensifies, changes in key slightly with some light sounds. The MT adds fast-paced riffs on the drum)

Can anyone out there help?

Just sing along and I'll help you shout

Mhm mmm yeah!

T: We can do this

We can do this

A: Here I am

A little boring

A little funny

I'm still a boy

Maybe I'll be a funny man.

N: I still want to play games when I grow up

But everyone wants me to be serious

Mhm mmmm yeah!

(Group starts to laugh and the music slows down gradually)

Playing here has really helped

Cause the world has high expectations, yeah! Mhm mmmm

(Music slows down more and MT ends with a fast-paced riff. The group laughs together).

Analysis of participants interviews:

Key words: emotions, boys, becoming men, the future, maturity, music therapy process

Main points brought from individual semi-structured interviews

A: Emotions can be helpful, but can also get in the way. Sometimes he may feel it's appropriate to express them as they really are, other times he feels sad, but expresses it as anger. He hopes to express his emotions as a man, with friends, a future partner and even his children. He hopes that by doing so, they may know that he is not perfect and that life has its ups and downs. He wants to be able to feel open and for those around him to feel comfortable with expressing their emotions with him. Because his parents are going through a divorce and attempting to hide it, he feels affected and does not want to be that kind of man one day. His own father, however, does not make him feel bad when A expresses his feelings. The music therapy sessions felt like a different form of therapy. He will remember a lot from the experience in general, but not a specific moment.

M: He expressed the hope of wanting to soften up with age. He hopes that in the process of becoming, he may learn new things that will make him wiser. His perceptions now as a teenage boy, and that of becoming a man have not changed but have rather expanded and he now thinks about it now because of the music therapy process. It felt like a new experience being able to share his emotions with the group because he was with his friends and he trusted them, as well as because sharing emotions with the group

outside of the room is not a common occurrence. M feels that is appropriate for men to express emotions and that one should not avoid expressing emotions. Expressing emotions should be done only with people you trust, because other people may use them against you. The process of doing music therapy did not change his perceptions about emotions and masculinity but did offer him the opportunity to think about it more. He never really thought about the fact that he is becoming a man and music therapy alerted him to that.

N: He would say his story and his life will potentially stay the same, for what he can foresee, but he will perhaps think more about his emotions. The overall experience felt quite different, being able to talk about and express his emotions with friends and people, as opposed to expressing emotions with strangers. It initially felt strange sharing information with the therapist, but over time, he felt more comfortable and 'normal' around the therapist. When asked whether this kind of 'normal' can be experienced outside of the room and the space, he said no and this was an experience he could only enjoy within the group therapy space. N felt that it is appropriate for one to express their emotions. He explained that they are sometimes helpful, but can often get in the way when people do not express their emotions properly. He concluded by saying he foresees himself as a man who will openly express his emotions. He experienced the music therapy process as fun and an experience he would engage in again. He also felt that the process helped him understand and change his views on his own emotions, but that the experience did not affect his views on being a man.

T: The future is not really a matter he worries much about now. The future is something that is coming and he can watch himself unfold into the man he is becoming. He does not express his emotions often, but the overall music therapy process has helped him begin to do so. The stage he is now in as a teenage boy has presented with a change in the relationship he shares with his father. His father is now a character he can express his emotions with and not only with his mother. T added that it is important for people in general to express them and channel them appropriately so as to not harm others and oneself. Finally, the music therapy process was enjoyable and it added something different to what would feel like mundane days. He also felt that the process strengthened their relationship as a group and as friends.

Main ideas from the data:

- Art is a vehicle that can help one reflect and introspect on one's inner feelings about themselves and events.
- Music therapy activity may feel unusual, and enjoyable.

- Expressing emotions should be acceptable and occurrent, but is sometimes not done, or is difficult as society does not always find it acceptable. A lack of open guidance or observable behaviour indicates to adolescent boys – becoming men, that emotions may not always be openly expressed.
- Some negative thoughts or events may have an effect on the participants, but there are elements one can feel hopeful about, which offer them a sense of ambition.
- The therapeutic space and relationship offer openness, a safe space for emotions to be expressed.