AutKom

A musical-bodily based group training supporting adults with autism and intellectual disability
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BACKGROUND

METHODS

RESULTS

CONCLUSION
BACKGROUND
Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Umbrella term to describe developmental disorders characterized by impaired:

- social interaction
- communication

Restrictive, repetitive patterns of behavior and interests

& deficiencies concerning affect regulation and emotional skills
Intellectual Disability (ID)

Neuro-developmental condition defined as IQ < 70

Prevalence of ASD in ID

One in four people with an ID has an additional ASD
Structured group trainings for persons with ASD

Well-established group concepts are focused on children - or on adolescents with high-functioning autism

A group concept for adults with ASD and ID is lacking...
Musical-bodily interventions

... have shown to be effective in children and adolescents with ASD

Music therapy for people with autism spectrum disorder
(Review)

Gerstsgger M, Elefant C, Misssler KA, Gold C

Though highly relevant, not yet frequently applied in treatment and support of adults
AutKom has been developed ...

... as a structured group training especially for people with ASD and ID

... to foster social and emotional skills

... combining an educational approach with musical-bodily interventions

... considering the characteristics and special needs of this subgroup
METHODS
Process

Starting in 2013, two full runs (each ~20 sessions) have been conducted by a pedagogue and a music therapist

Katrin Herberger  
certified pedagogue

Dr. Thomas Bergmann  
certified music therapist
Process

The cycle of the group sessions was designed as a constant sequence of consecutive steps
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CONCLUSION
Welcome Ritual

- Preparing the room together
- Reflexion of the last session
- Presentation of new topics
PMR exercise

- Tension: bodily action (e.g. jumping, light boxing)
- Release: mindfulness (listening to sounds)
Musical Action

- Interactive drumming
- Translation of psycho-motoric tension into musical dynamics

VIDEO: Dynamics level 1 (very soft) and level 5 (extremely loud and explosive)

Courtesy of the clients and their legal custodians
Break

- Snacks and drinks
- Practicing Smalltalk
- Timeout (e.g. leaving the room)
Education

• Visualization / illustration

• Group exercises and role play

VIDEO: Pantomimic presentation of the emotion "anxiety"

Courtesy of the clients and their legal custodians
Body exercise and Farewell Ritual

- Movement synchronization / dancing
- Reciprocity / balloon play

VIDEO: Mirroring & closing circle

Courtesy of the clients and their legal custodians
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Methods
- Body exercise and Farewell Ritual
  - Ice-breaking and systematization group exercise
  - Ice-breaking / Ice breaking play
- Welcome Ritual
  - Ice-breaking of systematization
  - Reflection of the rhythm of the group in a group exercise
- PMR exercise
  - Breathing while drinking in a group exercise
- Education
  -冰の効果は体験
  - Ice-breakering and ice breaking play
- Musical Action
  - Interactive performance
  - Translation of psychic rhythm into musical dynamics
- Break
  - Relax and think
  - Relaxing break
  - Review (e.g., learning the

Results

Conclusion
Needs assessment

Participatory approach:

Interview and questionnaire survey to assess the clients’ needs in the field of social, emotional, and practical skills
1. Soziale Kompetenzen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.1. Sich unterhalten / andere verstehen (Kommunikation)</th>
<th>😊</th>
<th>😐</th>
<th>😞</th>
<th>😡</th>
<th>Ja</th>
<th>Nein</th>
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Weitere Punkte:

Ideen/Kommentare:
Feasibility and acceptance ...

...was measured by the participation rate
Needs assessment

- Focus on social and practical skills

During the two runs, however, emotional issues and stress regulation came to the fore
Feasibility

- The overall participation rate was 84% with no dropouts
CONCLUSION
• AutKom was appropriate to support adults with ID on the autistic spectrum

• Emotional topics showed to be the most important issues

• Combining music and movement-based interventions with learning-theoretical principles showed promise
Future directions

- Ongoing outcome study in wait list control group design

- Target variables: social responsiveness, emotional skills, challenging behavior, and quality of life

...and who else wants to try out AutKom?
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