

# Possibilities of receptive music therapy for mothers raising children with developmental disorders as a self-help tool for overcoming stress during the COVID-19 pandemic

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## **Objectives**

On March 16th, 2020, a quarantine due to COVID-19 was announced and parents of children with developmental disorders were left without help from educational and health professionals. The change in routine, work restrictions, isolation increase in parents' level of stress. The aim of the article - to reveal the potential of online Receptive music therapy (RMT) for mothers of children with developmental disorders at the theoretical and empirical levels. *The tasks:* 1) to create a model of online RMT for stress reduction; 2) to evaluate the potential of RMT as a self-help therapeutic tool. The research question: how mothers can use the RMT self-help tool independently during the quarantine.

## **Materials and Methods**

A phenomenological approach using half-structured interviewing was chosen. Data was collected through analysis of music therapy sources, "Perceived Stress Scale" (PSS), "Musical Life Panorama" (MPL) interview, RMT self-help tool application register, and audio records of music therapy sessions. RMT self-help tool was developed - records with purposefully selected relaxing music. Four mothers with similar life experience of caregiving to a child with developmental disorders participated in the study.

## **Results**

Empirical research has shown that RMT improved the ability of participants to better identify stressful situations, become aware of the feelings and reactions that arise during them. The evolving habit of listening to relaxing music the level of stress and tension decreased, the ability to relax, calm down, and avoid anger was strengthened, which improved the overall emotional background in the family. The clients learned to use the RMT self-help tool independently.

## **Conclusions**

The application of RMT increased clients' ability to cope with stress and reduced the risk of recurring stressful situations. Study participants confirmed the effect of the RMT self-help tool on stress reduction both during online sessions and by applying the tool independently after the therapy, during COVID-19 quarantine.