

What Do the Cards Tell Me about – Melo-Therapeutic Experience Focused on Developing Emotional Intelligence

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Abstract

Introduction: Music therapy provides the access path to self, relying on overcoming barriers of communication and on non-verbal expression of emotions. Creative and expressive techniques helps people to understand themselves, to release accumulated anxieties, facilitating the development of emotional abilities.

Objectives: This research aims to study how receptive music therapy combined with other creative and expressive techniques in the experiential group determines the development of emotional intelligence. They were involved 60 subjects with a mean age of 23.74 years, divided into two groups (experimental and control). The members of the experimental group participated in an experiential training focused on developing emotional intelligence.

Methods: Before and after the intervention in the experiential group, the participants completed four psychological tests that assess the level of emotional intelligence development and its components: EIS (Schutte et al., 1998), TQE (Segal, 1999), TIE (adapted by Roco, 2001) and BTPIE (Wood & Tolley, 2003).

Results: The meto-therapeutic experience, followed by a profound psychological analysis, allowed the members of the experiential group to identify maladaptive patterns that they use in relationships with the others, mostly learned in childhood, then perpetuated sometimes even the over several generations, out of family loyalty.

Conclusions: The statistical results obtained show that the use of receptive music therapy together with other creative and expressive techniques challenges the participants to practice their own abilities of introspective analysis, to better know themselves and the others and to understand that each person is unique, and in order to live in harmony together with others, it is necessary to identify one's own emotions, but also of the others' and to efficiently manage them.

Keywords: *receptive music therapy, creative and expressive therapies, emotional abilities*

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I. Introduction

Music therapy has a wide range of applications and can operate in conjunction with other forms of creative and expressive psychotherapy, offering the benefit of a holistic intervention on a person's health and general wellbeing (Baker, 2010). It uses music to achieve positive changes in psychological, physical, cognitive or social functioning of people with health or learning problems (American Music Therapy Association, 2004 cit. in Malchiodi, 2005). It is a form of experiential therapy because it focuses on the client's musical experience, which it uses as main methodology. In music therapy, the client goes through a process of assessment and psychotherapeutic intervention by engaging in various types of musical experiences. From the perspective of music, there are four distinct types of experience: improvisation, recreation or interpretation, composition and audition. Each of these types of musical experiences:

- has its unique features;
- is defined by its own specific process of engagement;
- involves a certain set of sensory-motor behaviours;
- requires different perceptual and cognitive skills;
- evokes different emotions and feelings;
- undertakes a different interpersonal process;
- has its own therapeutic potential and applications.

Receptive music therapy has the following two dimensions: the meditative guiding with musical support and the restructuring psychological analysis (Petre, 2014). In the responsive experiments, the client listens to music and responds verbally or nonverbally to it. The music used consists in: improvisations, the client's interpretations and compositions or recordings from the musical literature in different styles (classical, rock, jazz, etc.). The listening experience can be focused on the physical, emotional, intellectual, aesthetic or spiritual aspects of music, and the client's answers are configured according to the therapeutic purpose of the experience.

Among the many versions of receptive music therapy, there is the projective audition, where the therapist presents a song and asks the client to identify, describe, interpret and/or freely associate it through the following verbal or non-verbal means: projective sound identification, free association, projective narration, musical dramatization, choosing a song, movement and projective drawing (Năstasă, 2013).

The American Association of Art Therapy

believes that the creative process is an excellent way to foster self-awareness and personal growth and, as a result, using art as therapy assumes that the artistic product and its associations can help clients to discover the best compatibility between their inner world and the outside one.

There are three trends in art therapy, according to the place that art occupies in therapy, as follows:

(1) Art therapy developed from psychology and psychotherapy, which is a form of psychotherapy that seeks a connection with art (the clients' artistic product is used as material for interpretation and support of verbal therapy);

(2) Art therapy developed from art - this trend does not refer directly to therapy and its techniques because it believes that art itself has therapeutic effects (the creative process and the conception of the artistic product are enough);

(3) The integrated approach to art and therapy, where the art is giving the person the opportunity to express oneself throughout the therapy and it is used for channelling, reducing and transforming emotions, aggression, negative energy and for obtaining psychological change (Dinisoae, 2000).

Using creative and expressive techniques helps eliminate bottlenecks and clients can "directly or symbolically reveal their feelings, emotions and beliefs in an open way, leading to the integration and development of their personality" (Mitrofan, 2008, p. 232). Creative therapy offers clients the ability to express emotions and feelings that are difficult or impossible to verbalize because songs, musical instruments, dance, colours, dough and stories are naturally available and the novelty of such concrete activities is pleasant, surprising and at the same time stimulating (Mitrofan, 2000).

More broadly, emotional intelligence involves a set of skills with which a person can discriminate and monitor their own emotions and the others', as well as the ability to use the information obtained to guide their own thinking and behaviour in order to achieve the goals set (Stefan & Kallay, 2010).

The current controversy on this construct refers to the following:

- it cannot be determined yet whether emotional intelligence is a cognitive or non-cognitive ability;
- whether it requires explicit or implicit emotional knowledge;
- whether it is an ability or the result of a specific social and cultural context (Zeidner, Matthwes

& Roberts, 2001).

▪ The fact is that adapting successfully to the challenges of reality is impossible without fundamental acquisitions in the cognitive, social and decision-making fields, which are subordinated to the emotional domain. In the view of Damasio & Yang (2007), successful learning in academia or in real life is primarily based on socio-emotional processes, correlated with the cognitive ones.

The diversity of emotional intelligence models led to their classification. Thus, Mayer, Caruso & Salovey (1999) made a distinction between:

▪ *the skills model* – a model developed by them, which sees emotional intelligence as a cognitive ability;

▪ *the mixed models* – models that address emotional intelligence as a combination of cognitive abilities and personality traits (cit in Lyusin, 2006).

Mayer & Salovey (1997) define emotional intelligence as "the ability to perceive, assess and express emotions, to access and generate feelings when they facilitate thinking, to understand emotions and emotional information and to regulate feelings for emotional and intellectual development" (cit. in Caruso, Mayer & Salovey, 2002, p. 306). The authors' theory states that emotional intelligence operates both within the cognitive system and the emotional one. Mostly, it works as a whole, but it is still subdivided into four branches, as follows:

(1) *Perception and identification of emotions* refers to a person's ability to accurately perceive and express emotions and it involves: (a) correct decoding of facial expressions, tone of voice and artistic expressions; (b) further processing of emotional information with reference to problem solving.

(2) *Emotional facilitation of thinking* involves the use of emotions to improve cognitive processes. This skill focuses on how emotions enter the cognitive system and work in harmony with reasoning (transforming knowledge to help thinking). It also changes the person's perspective, allowing him/her to see the world in a different way and understand what others are feeling. Examples: using emotions to focus attention on important events, generating emotions to facilitate decision making, use of mood swings as a means to assess different points of view or using emotions to encourage various solutions to solving problems (using the happiness status to generate new ideas or to activate creativity).

(3) *Understanding the emotions* involves the cognitive processing of emotions and includes the ability: (a) to understand complex emotions and the

way emotions evolve from one stage to another; (b) to recognize the causes of various emotions and to understand the relationships between them; (c) to translate emotions into an accessible language.

(4) *Managing emotions* aims at emotional self-regulation and managing other people's emotions. It assumes that, when having a feeling, a person experiences it and rather than represses it, one uses the emotion to take the most appropriate decision. Specifically, an emotionally intelligent person has the ability to work with emotions in a judicious, logic manner, rather than having habit of leaving oneself at their will and acting according to them, without thinking about the results. As a result of various popularizations, but also as a result of the social pressure to regulate emotions, emotional intelligence is often primarily identified with this branch (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2011; Caruso & Salovey, 2012).

Surveying the development of emotional intelligence in young people, responsive music therapy combined with other creative and expressive techniques have been used in experiential groups because they facilitate the expression of emotions in a different way from verbalization and makes people active and stimulates them to engage in a process of change and problem solving in such a way as to balance what they do with what they think and feel.

II. Method

In this study, 60 subjects were involved, with a mean age of 23.74 years and a standard deviation of 7.62, divided into two groups:

- The experimental group - made up of 30 subjects who attended an experiential module centred on developing emotional intelligence, for a period of 18 months.

- The control group - statistically comparable (age, sex, level of emotional intelligence development). In the pre and post experiential group intervention, the following four psychological tests were individually applied, tests that assess the level of emotional intelligence development and its components:

- The Emotional Intelligence Scale - EIS is a homogeneous tool (Schutte et al, 1998). For this study, we obtained a high Cronbach alpha internal consistency index ($\alpha = .869$), identical to the one presented by the authors.

- A test for measuring the emotional quotient through behaviour - TQE (Segal, 1999) - it is not a homogeneous instrument.

- A test for assessing emotional intelligence - TIE (adapted by Roco, 2001) with a very low

coefficient of internal consistency.

• The battery of tests for identifying the emotional intelligence profile - BTPIE (Wood & Tolley, 2003) for which the authors do not present data on its psychometric qualities, but the results of this research show good internal consistency for the total score ($\alpha = .80$). The battery components range from a high Cronbach α coefficient ($\alpha = .77$ for motivation) to a low one ($\alpha = .24$ for self-awareness).

For compliance with professional conduct, the written consent of each participant has been obtained and the results are kept confidential and used only for the present study.

In the experiential group, receptive music therapy was combined with other creative and expressive techniques to facilitate the experimentation *here and now* of life situations to help the participants develop their emotional intelligence and its components.

"Give yourself a few moments to relax and surrender to music. Meanwhile turn your attention to your own inside, notice what your feelings are here and now, which are your needs today, what you want in this moment. Maybe you are living a state of great happiness, contentment, fulfilment or, on the contrary, you are feeling sad, angry, dissatisfied. Be aware of all the emotions, desires or needs that you have now and here. [...]"

When you have clearly in mind all these emotions, desires or personal needs, approach and each of you will draw a green card and a brown one. Then, you will take them in your hands, investigate them, rotate them, and see what drawings they have on and what words they contain. Place the card containing the drawing above and in the centre of the other, on which the same word is written four times. Try to be aware of everything that is happening to you, what you are feeling, what thoughts are crossing through your mind or what memories these words and drawings are waking up. [...]"

Now, please, take a sheet of paper and a pencil and, starting from two cards and what they mean to each of you, make a story that contains the meaning both of the image and of the word, as well as the link between them. It can be any story you want to be, the important thing is to be as creative as possible.

As you create your story, I invite you to pay attention to the thoughts, emotions, and feelings that you are experiencing. [...]"

Please, make groups of four people, so that you know as little as possible about one another. Then, each of you will present your cards and your own story to other members of the group you belong to. After telling the story, it is very important that all the colleagues from the small group ask the creator of the story as many questions as they can about his/her creation. [...]"

We invite you to review your own story, originally created and subsequently completed as a result of the questions asked by your colleagues. Then, think deeply and try to make a correlation between your creation and the events that are happening in your own life these days. Take enough time, do not hurry, try to remember the story line and see how the story might be related to you. It is important to be aware of everything that is happening to you, what you are feeling, what thoughts or memories are crossing through your mind here and now."

In the end, the participants were asked to write down in their personal journal the association of the story created by them and the events taking place in their life at that time and how they were involved both in the making of the story and in the formulation of questions for colleagues in the small groups. Starting from the content of the journals, we resorted to the personal analysis of each participant, in the reunited group.

III. Results

The melo-therapeutic experience, followed by a profound psychological analysis, allowed the members of the experiential group to identify maladaptive patterns that they used in relationships with the others, mostly learned in childhood, then perpetuated sometimes even over several generations, out of family loyalty. For the transparency of the results, we exemplify by presenting the following sequence of the therapeutic labour of a participant in the group:

Thea (shows her cards to the group and describes it to them): *This word has the word child written, and this presents a pretty lady, very good-looking, leaning against the doorknob of a hotel.*



Fig. 1. Cards drawn by Thea

Therapist: *Interesting.*

Thea: *I like the first card very much, it really represents me, but I had to reflect very much on the second card, on what it means and what connection exists between the two cards. Then I thought that she too was a child deprived of affection, caring parents, a family, who came to live life this way.*

T: *What links did you find between this story and your own life?*

Thea: *With my life, only the first card can be connected, while this second... (easily shakes her head in negation).*

T: *It's very interesting how you separate them. That is, childhood represents me, while this image does not. How do you feel in front of her?*

Thea: *I feel compassion and at the same time I feel it unfamiliar of what is happening to me and how I conceive life. I mean, something is very distant, the most I can feel for such a woman is compassion and I am convinced that she is over and over again looking for affection, I am convinced that is what she does.*

T: *She is over and over again looking for affection...*

Thea: *As if she is waiting...*

T: *As if she is waiting...*

Thea: *And this hand on her hip also indicates that she is waiting and it is not a pleasant and passive wait, but a little challenging and ready to counter*

attack. And to connect it with my life...

T: *Speaking of the not just passive expectation for affection...*

Thea: *I did not see the direct connection with me. But eventually I thought, also inspired by the family tree made with Clara, that my father, an orphan from a year and a half, did not have a whole family, as we all want, but he was raised by a blind grandmother, who was his mother's mother.*

T: *Let's see more concretely, that is, we are going to analyse the family genogram, starting with the father's line because I see that his life history is on your mind more.*

Thea: *Yes.*

T: *Your parents' marriage resulted in three girls and you're the eldest.*

Thea: *My father died a year ago.*

T: *You talk a lot about your father.*

Thea: *Yes, I do because I find it an interesting situation as regarding his family. His mother died of peritonitis, when he was a year and a half old and his big brother was three years old. His father, who died when I was 3, never remarried.*

T: *Does this say anything to you?*

Thea: *That he loved his wife very much, that he had not been able to get attached to another woman so as to marry her and he stayed with his boys?!*

T: *Up to what age did his grandmother bring*

up your father?

Thea: *I do not know exactly. I only know that when my father was 16 when he left his hometown for another town where he attended the aviation school. He was very proud of it; when our husbands came into the family, he showed each of them his pilot's licence. But he never practiced it because of health issues.*

T: *What was your father like?*

Thea: *He was a very tidy, absolutely very tidy person; he liked to give orders and had a highly developed aesthetic sense. My father belonged, unlike my mother's family, to a family of wealthy farmers, a family of artists with many paintings. He painted and was very proud of an uncle of his, who was a renowned tenor and he always boasted about him. In the small town where we lived when I was little, my father was a much admired man, with a very stylish hat, a suit of good cloth and a good tie. There was a big discrepancy between his elegant outfit and the environment from which he had come.*

T: *How did he end up in that place?*

Thea: *While doing his military service, his brother was assigned to the service here and decided to sell the family home with all the furniture carved and all valuables there. He announced my father to come here because he had sold everything in their hometown ... So, after the military service, my father found himself without his parents' house and...*

T: *Shall I take it that it was done without his consent?!*

Thea: *Everything had disappeared so he lived for some time in his brother's house, already married, together with their father. Because he felt uncomfortable, he thought he should start a family very soon. He worked in an office as an accountant. Many ladies were courting him, he was very attractive and finally he chose my mother, who was less attractive... He shocked everyone because, out of so many possibilities, he chose my mother, a woman who was very serious and did not even lay an eye on my father, considering him too handsome for her. However, I believe he chose a mother, a woman who could take care of him. And tried to emancipate her, as much as he could, meaning that he would buy her all kinds of lipsticks and perfumes.*

T: *And she did nothing at all...*

Thea: *Mom would say: "Leave me in peace, dear". He wanted to see her stylish and she did, up to a point until she no longer felt good being so embellished by my father. I remember, as a child, that whenever they were leaving somewhere he used to tell her: "Dear, put on that dress, wear that lipstick!" She had*

many fur coats purchased by my father, but did not feel good in them.

T: *She did not wear them, they were not to her liking.*

Thea: *She did not even wear them on holidays. God, how I take to her.... I'm so sorry that I resemble my mother. I like chic women, but...*

T: *You love them just as your father did, but obviously you took your mother's model of femininity, with which you identified yourself.*

Thea: *Yes, I always wanted to look like my mother...*

T: *Because...*

Thea: *My mother was a serious woman, very determined, she seemed to me as A clever, wise, very responsible and affectionate woman.*

T: *I understand. But be careful: your mother was wise, clever, very responsible, very affectionate and determined. And didn't she have anything from what you have chosen?*

Thea: *A... that sex appeal...*

T: *It was what your father apparently wanted very much from your mother, this sex appeal as you call it... and your mother obviously refused it. She was serious, clever, wise, determined, and responsible, but never with sex appeal; while your father was busily trying to change her. Your father took care of his image, he stood out in the way he dressed, the way he wanted to embellish his wife.*

Thea: *Yes, yes, he was very stylish. He told my mother, before he died, exactly how to shave him, how to dress him, in a brown pinstriped suit, with A yellow tie with brown polka dots and a matching shirt. Yes, he wanted to be very handsome, even dead.*

T: *What do you think led your father to want it so much?*

Thea: *He was looking for everyone's attention and affection, to be the most handsome, the best. I remember in high school, my sister's form teacher told us: "Hey, what a handsome dad you have, but I am convinced that your mother is a clever woman to be able to keep such a handsome man by her side for a life-time." Indeed, my father was dependent on her until his last moment and he was always telling us how much he loved our mother. Again and again he would tell me: "There is no other woman in the world like your mother".*

T: *It is interesting that although he loved your mother very much, yet he loved a certain type of feminine image, proof being that after your father's death, your mother's image had changed completely.*

Thea: *Yes.*

T: *That is the image of the type of woman your father loved and you have noticed this since childhood: an embellished, stylish, well-dressed woman, a woman with whom he could create an image ... To what extent this desire of your father has influenced you? You are always embellished, well-dressed...*

Thea: *No, no way, I do not take care of myself and I always rebuke myself, but other things are always a priority, more important than...*

T: *Than the image...*

Thea: *Than the way I look. For me it is important, when talking to a person, to listen to what he says or how he thinks and I don't notice anymore how he is dressed.*

T: *This means, being clever, wise...*

Thea: *Yes, yes...*

T: *Being like your mother. You love the image of your mother, as she was beyond the stylizing your father wanted... But it's interesting that you rebuke it because you sometimes forget...*

Thea: *Because I know that men like women to be chic. I like that, too.*

T: *But be careful, your father liked chic women and at the same time he would said, "There are no women in the world like your mother is". Still, his statements are contradictory.*

Thea: *Eventually, he appreciated the other side, but I am convinced that if she had been stylish, he would not have loved her less. On the contrary... (still thinking).*

T: *What's on your mind right now?*

Thea: *I am thinking about my father's family, which was a family of very talented people: an uncle who worked in the Foreign Ministry, an aunt who knew many foreign languages, a French mother and an uncle who worked in the army and they were some very, very cultured people. They spent their holidays with us and my mother took very good care of them and made them feel good.*

T: *Thus, to come and visit you.*

Thea: *Yes... and here I say that my mother was so wise to be able to draw my father near his roots. In fact, my father was a rootless, a motherless child, and then wandering through the country as a young man, growing up by himself and influenced by foreigners, not his family, by his roots.*

T: *His relationship with his father was not good?*

Thea: *It did not really exist. His father was a teacher at the "Belle Arts" (so would my father call it) so it probably was a place for painting, sculpting, where he was a teacher...*

T: *Did he live in a high level of education?*

Thea: *Yes, yes ... I know I used to repeat myself when I was little, like a parrot, although not knowing what it meant: "I'll attend Belle-Arts", I would hear my father and...*

T: *Not just his grandfather was a teacher there. Interestingly, this grandfather, who fascinated everyone, had a position that you have today, too: you are a teacher and you teach others. What about the grandmother who raised your father? What did she do?*

Thea: *A ... I know nothing about her...*

T: *It seems that the fascinating character is your grandfather.*

Thea: *My grandfather and all his brothers.*

Thea tells, in detail and with obvious pleasure, about her grandfather and all his brothers who had many properties that were nationalized after the arrival of the Communist regime. As a result, most of them did not yield in, on the contrary, they were outraged, and they hated the whole system and suffered a number of illnesses.

T: *It is interesting that, on the one hand, they had these properties confiscated, which gave them a certain power, and on the other hand, they were families of higher rank exactly in a regime that had destroyed virtually everything they had gathered.*

Thea: *Yes, yes... my father's cousins, everyone had positions in various ministries.*

T: *So, the sons, while their fathers had much resentment towards the regime which their children belonged to.*

Thea: *Exactly. They probably crossed over to the other extreme in order to adapt and live, they were young...*

T: *Maintain status. I cannot help noticing, with what pleasure you tell about how they decorated their homes and the riches that they had, that your father's family was a family of high rank and the fact that your father was a very presentable man, that he was noticed by all the women in high school, teachers saying "oh, what a handsome father you have". So it seems that this need for an image and a status is very important to you and to the whole family on your paternal line. And I wonder where does this need to be strong, to be seen well, to be a family of high rank comes from...*

Thea: *Nods, without verbalizing.*

T: *We cannot fail to notice certain flexibility (the next generation switching from one extreme to the other). This is an important resource for your family.*

Thea: *To me, it seems as if they are some very smart people who have managed to attend a*

good school, capable people and not necessarily opportunistic...

T: Interesting that you think about opportunism.

Thea: Yes, because I do not like opportunists.

T: It's your shadow side. Sometimes, does it not happen to you to run away from an opportunity, from taking advantage of a situation? Then you would say "I do not like opportunists, but I can lead the relationship with my husband from the backstage, as he always does everything I like, but I do not like opportunists".

Thea: I guess I am thinking about something else when I say opportunism. If I have a belief and at this time I'd be better if I gave up my belief, so that I will be well, that seems to me to be opportunism.

T: But didn't you happen to drop a certain strategy at a point to just immediately adopt another one, which you thought it would have been better for your husband, in order to meet your needs?

Thea: I was thinking about things related to moral, to morality. Here I do not abdicate just to be better. But, if I happened to shout out at my husband, I realized that was not working and then I talked to him nicely, that was what I did, but I do not feel that I have violated a moral law. (The group laughs)

Caty: You have just manipulated him beautifully.

Thea: Yes. What does it cost? Everyone feels good! (Then she tells, smiling, her own strategy to obtain his support in driving her wherever she needs and in picking her up). And so, from my father's great family, I have come to tell you about...

T: It seems your father's family was saved because of these resources: flexibility and creativity (a family of artists who, although in different regimes, had high positions). These are important resources that you seem to have inherited, too.

Thea: Yes, I did.

T: Well, opportunism is seen and re-stated a

resource to adapt to changes in life.

Thea: Yes, it is. I think that it was very useful to me, especially in my family.

Due to the clarifying questions, Thea made the connection between her cards and her own life. Thus, she realized that she perceived the woman on her card as being ostentatious, although she was physically beautiful, stylish and had a good image, important for her father's family and for herself. Meanwhile, her mother's idea of femininity was different because it was associated more with wisdom, judgment and care for others. She also discovered that having identified herself, on the one hand, with her mother, she takes great care that her husband eats well and does not miss anything. On the other hand, she identifies herself with her father and thus she chose a husband to protect and splurge her ("like a lady of high rank"), on whom she came to be dependent and to believe, according to the transgenerational model of father's family, that her life ends with his. During this period, due to professional concerns, she has neglected herself as a woman, as well as their intimate relationship, so she is afraid not to lose him for another woman (the provocative woman waiting outside a hotel in figure 1).

The experiential group members had the opportunity to develop their own emotional intelligence due to activation of resources, discovery of new patterns of effective interaction, awareness and accountability for their own decisions in life. The whole melo-therapy experience, followed by an in-depth psychological analysis of the youngsters, led to the development of self-awareness ($t(58) = 2.01, p = .05$), a greater ability to regulate their emotions ($t(58) = 6.25, p = .001$), increased motivation ($t(58) = 2.91, p = .01$), improved empathy ($t(58) = 7.88, p = .001$), as well as improved social skills ($t(58) = 4.41, p = .001$). The effectiveness of the experiential module centred on developing emotional intelligence is demonstrated by the t-test results shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparisons of means and standard deviations, post-test

Psychological tests	Mean (σ)	Mean (σ)	t
	Experimental group	Control group	
IE – EIS (Schutte et al., 1998)	129.60 (11.78)	122.47 (10.27)	2.49*
IE – TQE (Segal, 1999)	8.87 (1.92)	6.43 (1.96)	4.85**
IE – TIE (adapted by Roco, 2001)	109.50 (22.33)	86.33 (23.45)	3.91**
IE – BTPIE (Wood & Tolley, 2003)	66.93 (4.66)	60.06 (3.31)	6.56**

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$

IV. Discussions

In the experiential group, we aimed at developing the clients' emotional abilities by activating personal resources, discovering new patterns of effective interaction, raising awareness and accountability for their own life. The creative-expressive experience led to the recognition of hidden conflicts, repressed feelings and to the conciliation between the unconscious and the conscious (in the artistic act, the conflict was relived, solved and integrated). At the same time, it stimulated the group members to experience the role of being the creator of their own situation, not only that of the victim, and encouraged the development of better interpersonal relationships and the increase of a better communication between people. It also challenged the participants to practice their own abilities of introspective analysis, to better know themselves and understand that each person is unique, and that to live together in harmony with others, it was necessary to identify their own emotions and also those of others' and to efficiently manage them.

The statistical results presented show that the use of receptive music therapy alongside with other expressive and creative techniques allowed the members of the experiential group to identify maladaptive patterns that they used in relationships with the others, mostly learned in childhood, then perpetuated sometimes even over several generations, out of family loyalty. The subjects in the experimental group have statistically significant improved the level of emotional intelligence development, assessed with all four psychological tests: Emotional Intelligence Scale - EIS (Schutte et al, 1998), the test for measuring the emotional quotient through behaviour - TQE Segal, 1999), the test for assessing emotional intelligence - TIE (adapted by Roco, 2001) and the battery of tests to ascertain the profile of emotional intelligence - BTPIE (Wood & Tolley, 2003).

The stories triggered by the melo-therapeutic experience and the cards drawn facilitated the emotional expression of the experiences that the youngsters communicated and then gave them meaning within a relationship based on emotional safety. The personal effects arising in the experiential group members come to highlight the scientist Sara's opinion (2013), who considers that working with the OH cards can achieve the following benefits:

- encourage free expression, communication and social interaction;
- stimulate imagination and creativity;
- encourage reflection, introspection and self-

evaluation;

- rediscover your inner child;
- facilitate access to exploration and access to inner meanings;
- improve intuition;
- put the client in real contact with oneself and with others;
- explore differences in perception, projection, transfer, simulation, knowledge, intuition and meaning, which nuance the differences and similarities between people;
- facilitate tolerance and openness to diversity (Sara, 2013).

This study is part of a wider research which focused on developing young people's emotional intelligence through an experiential group - which followed the entire demarche of the educational experiment, starting from the design of the experiential module and ending with its validation, accompanied by the results achieved, proving real implications in improving professional behaviour. The subjects in the experimental group have achieved higher scores, statistically significant, from one test to another, for each component of the emotional intelligence, which enables us to characterize them as being able to:

- identify and express their own emotions, adopt a positive attitude, be honest with themselves and respect themselves, avoid focusing only on logic and reason;
- regulate their emotions and impulses, be more flexible, detached from problems and express emotions in an assertive manner;
- channel their desire and evolutionary striving to achieve their goals, take initiative and maintain their optimistic attitude towards the challenges of life;
- identify and accept others' feelings, participate in others' emotional problems avoiding to engage in solving them, relating to others' feelings and needs without sacrificing their own emotional experience;
- initiate, develop and maintain high quality and constructive interpersonal relationships, communicate and collaborate effectively in work groups (Nastasă, 2010).

The results obtained support the vision of a new educational paradigm and confirm the view of the authors L. Mitrofan et al. (2007) that such a module has the following positive effects on participants:

- development of emotional intelligence and empathy;
- development of social and relational

intelligence;

- development of cultural intelligence and of inclusive community and interethnic strategies;
- spiritual maturity, development of inter-confessional and religious tolerance;
- development of consciousness, responsibility, environmental attitudes and behaviours (L. Mitrofan, 2007).

V. Conclusions

Using receptive music therapy alongside with other expressive and creative techniques within the experiential group challenged participants to experience here and now various life situations and thus to become aware of their own perceptions, thoughts, emotions, feelings, fears, blockages and vulnerabilities which they later could assume consciously, transform by resignification and take control over them and over oneself. The melo-therapeutic experience and the facilitator space of the experiential group stimulated young people to discover their own way to best meet the challenges of life and the chance to negotiate with oneself, to forgive and accept, to stimulate, appreciate, respect, and gratify oneself consciously and responsibly.

Thus, they learned to understand themselves, to change their perspective on things and on their own person. In and through the meeting with oneself and with each other, they have activated their resources and rechannelled their blocked energies towards a creative and flexible personal and professional development, always based on free elections and accountability. Enlightening for this is an excerpt from the diary written by Thea:

"I realized that I'm addicted to my husband, which I call «father». This is due to the relationship with my father who did not give me enough affection, or, rather, not as much affection as I needed, being the eldest of my sisters. My dethronement was very quick: the next sister appeared in the family 2 years after me. Since early days, I was accountable for bringing up my sister, which I had spoiled. My father had a huge impact on me in the sense that, having him as a role-model, I became equally demanding and critical both to myself and to those around me: my daughters, my husband, my students.

I want performance from everyone. I have followed the same role-model of the father regarding the physical appearance in choosing my husband. In terms of personality, I preferred to break the transgenerational chain and chose to marry a calm, balanced, very thoughtful and tolerant man, in contrast

with my father. Another discovery was my need to excessively control everything that was happening to me and to my family. These findings led me to explain many of my terrors, thoughts, feelings and behaviours, to alleviate, to change, to be more relaxed in the relationship with me and other family members, to be happier with my life and far more confident in my potential to adapt to demanding life situations".

The personal gains achieved by each member of the experiential group are consistent with the views of Lynn (2005), which argues that emotional intelligence is one of the main factors of success that allows the person to work in harmony with others and to achieve personal and professional gratification so as to live according to his/her own wishes.

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