



CONFERENCE

Oct 18, 2025



MODULATIONS: CONNECTING LEGACY AND
INNOVATION IN CURRENT PRACTICE

WITH KEYNOTE SPEAKER:
BARBARA WHEELER, PHD, MT-BC

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

8:00-8:30	Registration & Refreshments
8:30-8:45	Welcome & Introductions
8:45-10:15	Keynote: Music Therapy: Thoughts About the Past, Present, and Future Barbara Wheeler, PhD, MT-BC
10:15-10:30	Break
10:30-11:30	Concurrent Sessions: Meaghan Jackson Sheila Lee Kirsten Davis
11:30-12:15	Lunch Break & Networking
12:15-1:00	Panel Discussion
1:00-1:15	Raffle - First Draws
1:15-1:30	Break
1:30-2:30	Concurrent Sessions: Liz Moffitt & Noele Bird Lisa Mullaly Camilla Schroeder
2:30-2:45	Break
2:45-3:45	Concurrent Sessions: Sue Baines Jessica Shen Clara Troje Kathleen VanderPloeg
3:45-4:15	Raffle Draws & Closing Remarks

“Music Therapy: Thoughts About the Past, Present, and Future”

Barbara Wheeler, PhD, MT-BC



Dr. Barbara Wheeler shares her perspective of the development of formal music therapy training in the USA and other countries in the world. Her keynote begins with how music therapy developed in the USA in the 1950s and ties these origins to the development of music therapy in Canada and other countries where it was developed somewhat later - including the music therapy program at Capilano College which was founded in 1976. This timely presentation showcases Barbara's personal perspective as a long-time clinician, educator, author, researcher, and external examiner in many countries around the world, and will conclude with insights about how the profession of music therapy may continue to develop in the future.

Barbara L. Wheeler, PhD, MT-BC has shared her expertise across the globe, with faculty roles in Germany and Poland, and examining students' talents for universities around the world. Barbara's extensive contributions include editing and writing for essential texts, and she has left her mark as a past president of the American Music Therapy Association. Honored with lifetime achievement awards from both the World Federation of Music Therapy and the American Music Therapy Association, Barbara is an icon in music therapy, dedicated to the healing power of music. Dr. Wheeler is a highly accomplished music therapist with a wealth of experience and expertise in the field. With a distinguished career spanning several decades, Barbara has made significant contributions to music therapy education, research, and clinical practice. Learn more about Barbara's extensive contributions to the field at www.barbarawheelermt.com.

10:30-11:30 Concurrent Sessions

“From Loss to Lament: A Study of Songwriting as an Expression of Grief on Cape Breton Island”

Meaghan Jackson, MA, RCT-C, MTA, FAMI

Cape Breton Island/Unama’ki in Nova Scotia has a long history of telling stories through song. This presentation presents findings from a qualitative interview study examining songwriting as an expression of grief amongst Cape Breton songwriters. Insights from this research will guide a discussion on the use of songwriting in music therapy.



Meaghan, MA, RCT-C, MTA, FAMI, is a recent graduate from the MA in Creative Arts Therapy program at Concordia University and is an experienced music therapist in palliative and bereavement care. Songwriting is at the heart of her practice and research. After many years living and working in Vancouver, she drove her family across the country in a converted school bus and landed on Cape Breton Island where she continues to work virtually and in-person with BC residents.

This presentation will take place in Training Room A and will be available to watch on Livestream A.

10:30-11:30 Concurrent Sessions

“Expressive Therapies in Neurorehabilitation”

Sheila Lee, MA, MTA, FAMI, NICU-MT, NMT, RCC

Creativity is essential in developing treatment plans for children and youth in pediatric neurorehabilitation. Interdisciplinary collaboration creates multiple options for supporting people with Traumatic Brain Injuries, Spinal Cord injuries, Disorders of Consciousness, Psychosomatic Disorders, and Functional Neurological Disorders. Blending music therapy with play, sandtray, art, guided imagery, and movement can strengthen the mind-body connection as well as enhance well-being and overall wellness. Engaging in expressive therapies enables people to tap into their unconscious and re-emerge into their conscious lives to influence brain function, cognitive processes, physical and emotional awareness.



Sheila is humbled to journey alongside and support families in Sunny Hill Health Centre's Acute Rehabilitation Unit at BC Children's Hospital. Her 16+ years as a music therapist include working in hospitals, schools, non-profit organizations, and private practice. She obtained her BMT from CapU and MA in Counselling from UVic. Additional trainings include trauma-informed expressive arts therapy, therapeutic yoga, therapeutic play, clinical hypnosis, and early childhood education.

This presentation will take place in Training Room B and will be available to watch on Livestream B.

10:30-11:30 Concurrent Sessions

“Playing Guitar With Cops: Developing Music Therapy Services for First Responders with PTSD”

Kirsten Davis, MTA, MA, RCC

The COVID-19 pandemic presented a challenge and an opportunity during Kirsten’s 25th year of music therapy practice: the sudden loss of palliative care contracts and an unexpected job in mental health! Kirsten will describe the process of creating a music therapy program in trauma and addiction recovery for first responders at Homewood Ravensview. She will outline the treatment needs of this population, describing how music therapy supports PTSD symptom management, emotional regulation, and social re-connection within Herman’s (1998) triphasic model of trauma recovery.



Kirsten is a graduate of Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario (BMT, 1994), and Concordia University, Montreal (MA, 2018). Since 2019 she has served as music therapist at Homewood Ravensview in North Saanich, B.C., a residential treatment facility for clients with post-traumatic stress, mental health, and substance use disorders. She has currently serves as the MTABC Ethics Chair, and enjoys cycling, gardening, and snuggling with her adorable pets.

This presentation will take place in the Kootenay Room.

12:15-1:00 Panel Discussion

"Cultural Safety in Music Therapy Practice"



Panel Moderator:

**Sheila Lee, MA, MTA, FAMI, NICU-MT, NMT,
RCC**

*Please find Sheila's bio under
"Concurrent Sessions"*



Panelist:

Barbara Wheeler, PhD, MT-BC

*Please find Barbara's bio under
"Keynote Speaker"*



Panelist:

Jude Pereira, MTA, BMT

Jude Pereira (they/he) is A QTPOC learning disabled and neurodiverse music therapist. Working, over the last decade, in community practice through an anti oppressive lens they strive to create engaging and therapeutic programming that opens space for the celebration and catharthis of marginalized experiences.

12:15-1:00 Panel Discussion

"Cultural Safety in Music Therapy Practice"



Panelist:

Felicia Wall, BMT, CMT

Felicia (she/her) graduated from Capilano University in 2015 and has worked in the field as a music therapist specializing in addictions and made-vulnerable youth. She is passionate about providing quality music therapy for people who are often marginalized by society, and part of that work has including supervising and supporting many new music therapists. She is currently on the last legs of her Masters of Counselling degree.



Panelist:

Abigail LaForest, BMT

Abigail LaForest is a recent graduate of the Bachelor of Music Therapy program at Capilano University. Their perspective is shaped by over seven years of caregiving for wheelchair users with cerebral palsy, autism, and blindness, as well as supporting newcomers to Canada and Squamish Nation students. As a non-binary, neurodivergent person, Abigail is committed to accessibility, disability justice, and cultural humility in music therapy.

1:30-2:30 Concurrent Sessions

“From Roots to Resonance: Evolving the Bonny Method of GIM for a Trauma-Informed World ”

*Noele Bird, MMT, MTA, RCC, FAMI, Trainer of the Bonny Method of GIM
&*

*Liz Moffitt, MA, MTA, RCC, FAMI, Retired Trainer of the Bonny Method of GIM,
Faculty Emeritus, Capilano University*

This presentation traces the evolution of Guided Imagery & Music (GIM), created in the 1970s by Helen Bonny. While honoring GIM’s roots as a method for deep inner exploration, the session highlights how GIM has adapted over time to include and support trauma-informed care, accessibility, and cultural sensitivity. Offering both theory and experiential exercises using “smaller containers” designed to create safety for healing, this content is useful for both beginners and experienced practitioners interested in using music and imagery in a gentle, safe way.



Noele Bird is an Accredited Music Therapist and Registered Clinical Counsellor in private practice since 1988. She worked closely with Liz Moffitt to become a Trainer of the Bonny Method of Guided Imagery & Music and the Director of The Pacific Transpersonal Training with GIM. Noele is currently the Education Chair for the Association for Music & Imagery.



Liz Moffitt was a faculty member in the Capilano Music Therapy Training Program for over 35 years and worked to help establish the training as a degree program. She was the first Canadian Trainer of the Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music (GIM) and offered trainings for over 20 years across Canada. Currently she maintains a small private practice in counselling and GIM.

***This presentation will take place in Training Room A and
will be available to watch on Livestream A.***

1:30-2:30 Concurrent Sessions

“Designing Bottom-up Care: Building a Polyvagal-Informed, Neurosequential, and Neurodivergent-Affirming Interdisciplinary Team”

Lisa Mullaly, RCC, MTA

This session explores how polyvagal theory, the Neurosequential Model, and neurodivergent-affirming values can guide the design of an interdisciplinary team and therapy model. Lisa shares how Creative Counselling Centre integrates music, art, recreation, and nature-based practices to support regulation, interoception, and relational safety—key precursors to therapeutic change. Ideal for music therapists, program developers, and clinicians interested in bottom-up care and clinic leadership rooted in nervous system science, inclusive values, and creative modalities.



Lisa Mullaly is a Registered Clinical Counsellor and Certified Music Therapist with master's degrees in both fields. She is the founder and clinical director of Creative Counselling Centre, an interdisciplinary therapy practice in Squamish, BC. Lisa specializes in trauma-informed and neurodivergent-affirming care, and integrates music, play, art, and recreation therapy into her work with children, youth, families, and adults. Her clinical leadership focuses on building bottom-up, regulation-first models that promote relational safety and developmental healing.

This presentation will take place in Training Room B and will be available to watch on Livestream B.

1:30-2:30 Concurrent Sessions

“I Lost My Voice for Two Months in 2024!”

Camilla Schroeder, BMT, CMT, NMT

This practical workshop-style presentation will reveal the challenges of losing one's voice as a music therapist, the personal experience and process it took the presenter to fully recover. Practical techniques on how to care for one's tired, fading voice are also the presenter's warm-up/cool-down options for maintaining vocal health in the profession in which our voice is vital. Participants will have the chance to practice these techniques.



Camilla teaches Guitar Private Music Instruction in the Capilano University MT program. She has worked for Vancouver Coastal Health for 20 years as a music therapist in long-term care, oncology, and palliative care. She regularly supervises students, and has contributed to the profession as a board member with the MTABC. She started singing at age 9 and has sung in choirs, top 40 bands and jazz duos, and studio recordings.

This presentation will take place in the Kootenay Room.

2:45-3:45 Concurrent Sessions

“Anti-Oppressive Music Therapy in Times Such as These”

Sue Baines, PhD, MTA, FAMI

We are living in complex and challenging times. Authoritarian politics are driving increasing personal, community, and global pain too often leading to overwhelm and burn out. As caregivers, music therapists need to develop specific reliable supports to maintain our individual and collective wellness. Anti-oppressive music therapy provides a social justice framework applicable to all music therapy practices and is empowering. Through allying with social justice networks, we strengthen ourselves and our communities.



Sue Baines, PhD, MTA, FAMI, is respectfully grateful and appreciative to live and learn on the stolen territories of the Lil'wat, xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Shíshálh, Skwxwú7mesh, and Səlílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh Nations on Turtle Island. She is a feminist/activator/anti-oppressive music therapist, teaches at Capilano University in North Vancouver, BC, and practices music therapy in long-term care. In her doctoral research, Sue explored anti-oppressive practices in music therapy and developed the general theory of Anti-Oppressive Music Therapy.

This presentation will take place in Training Room A and will be available to watch on Livestream A.

2:45-3:45 Concurrent Sessions

“Adapting Music Therapy in Long-Term Care: Inclusive and Creative Approaches to Support Diverse Needs”

Jessica Shen, MTA, BMT, NMT

This presentation explores how music therapy in long-term care can adapt to meet the needs of a diverse and changing resident population. Jessica will share a variety of creative and inclusive interventions designed to engage individuals of all abilities, regardless of their physical, cognitive, or emotional needs. These adaptable programs foster social connection, self-expression, and meaningful engagement for all residents. Drawing from clinical experience, this session highlights how music therapists can adapt their practices while maintaining flexibility, creativity, and strong therapeutic foundations.



Jessica is a certified music therapist who graduated from Capilano University in 2016. She is currently completing sound healing training and works as the Music Therapist Supervisor at Louis Brier Home & Hospital. Jessica serves as Treasurer on the MTABC Board and supervises students from Capilano University and Berklee College of Music. She has been passionate about working with older adults since volunteering at care homes at a young age.

This presentation will take place in Training Room B and will be available to watch on Livestream B.

2:45-3:45 Concurrent Sessions

“Creativity, Identity, and Awkward Moments: A Music Therapy Pilot Project in Inpatient Youth Eating Disorder Treatment”

Clara Troje, MTA, BMT, BMus

In this presentation Clara will be describing a trial music therapy project on the inpatient adolescent eating disorders of BC Children's Hospital. She will be sharing clinical examples of group work, some of the theoretical foundations in narrative therapy that inspire her (including preferred stories, insider knowledge, and bringing in the past, present and future), and learnings from co-facilitating with an occupational therapist. This session will provide the perspective of a newer music therapist experimenting with theory and practice.



Clara (she/they) is a music therapist in her 3rd year of practice. She works at BC Children's Hospital on an acute medical/surgical unit, and at Sheway, supporting new moms on the DTES. As of September 2025, she is on leave from her music therapy work while completing the in-person part of her Master's of Social Work at UVic. She hopes to learn more about relational, narrative, and community-based approaches on this journey, while remaining dedicated to pursuing strange and creative life experiments.

NOTE: This presentation is the first of two, while Kathleen VanderPloeg's presentation is the second. Both will take place in the Kootenay Room.

2:45-3:45 Concurrent Sessions

“Using The Old to Touch The New”

Kathleen VanderPloeg, BMUS

Kathleen will be sharing about the complex world of working with adults with diverse abilities as seen through the lens of a student music therapist. Working with adults with diverse abilities can be about touching the hearts and souls of 50-year-olds by using music designed for children in the 70's and about incorporating new ideas and research into sessions through 'older' activities. Come along as Kathleen shares how she's been learning to incorporate the old with the new as a student music therapist.



After completing her Bachelors in Music at the King's University in 2023 and loving her psychology courses just as much as teaching Kathleen realized music therapy might just be perfect for her, so she joined the music therapy program at CAPU that same year. Kathleen is currently completing her internship at Ridge Meadows Association of Community Living with Birgit Giesser and is on track to graduate in February 2026.

NOTE: This presentation is the second of two, while Clara Troje's presentation is the first. Both will take place in the Kootenay Room.

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