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Early Intervention for Autism

Determining the efficacy of Musical Interaction Therapy
Presentation outline

• Early social development in typical infants c.f. those with Autism.
• Social timing: a critical difference
• Musical Interaction Therapy (MIT) addresses social timing
• DVDs of MIT
• Results of case study evaluation
A social interaction model of development in typical infants

• Social timing sensitivities and skills are crucial to enable interaction flow (re: pitch, tone, intonation, turn-taking etc)
• Preverbal communication enables and contributes to development of joint understanding, social agency, gesture, teasing, empathy and symbolic functioning (pretending, language).
Early Autism Difficulties and

*introduction to Helen (3yrs, evaluated case study)*
Early **Autism** Difficulties and intro to *Helen (3yrs)*

- **Difficulties in Social Interaction** *(lack of social timing, eye-contact)* impairing other more sophisticated developments *(hence no teasing and empathy)*
- **Difficulties with Language** as lack of preverbal conversations affects development of flexible symbols *(no gesture/spoken language)*
- **Difficulties in Flexible Thinking and Play** also depend on symbolic functioning *(obsessions, no pretending)*
Musical Interaction Therapy
Currently offered at the William Mathias Music Centre,
Co-funded by Gwynedd & Anglesey LEAs with the Welsh Arts Council
Supported by SCS Clinical Psychologists from NWW NHS Trust
Musical Interaction Therapy Is it effective?

4 months video assessments pre MIT to determine developmental trend lines

1 year of twice weekly MIT plus assessments without music for initial 7 months

2 yr Follow Up assessments
Statistically significant positive changes recorded for pre- and post-MIT periods

Statistically significant positive changes recorded for pre and post MIT periods, in:

- frequency of eye-contact,
- readiness to socially acknowledge mother
- initiations of interactions
- length of interactions (in turns)
- child’s creative contributions to interactions
- Also, pretend play established in MIT period.
Eye contacts per minute during play with toys

Timepoints pre, during and post MIT
Minutes passed without Social Acknowledgement (Mo. passive)

Timepoints pre, during and post MIT
Child’s changes to established interaction patterns

Timepoints pre, during and post MIT
Child’s initiations of social engagement (mostly preverbal)

Timepoints pre, during and post MIT

N/A @ follow up