

Fall 2006

4201 North 16th Street, Suite 110
Phoenix, AZ 85016



NMTSA
Neurologic Music Therapy
Services of Arizona

Celebrating 25 Years of Serving the Phoenix Community!

Now in its 25th year, NMTSA provided home-based services for 20 years, opened its clinic five years ago, is currently in its first year as a non-profit corporation, and will be expanding its support services in 2007.

Upcoming Events

October 21
Competency-Based
Communication Group

November 11
Competency-Based
Communication Group

December 5
NMT Parent Training

December 9
Competency-Based
Communication Group

*call 602-840-6410 to find out more and sign up for these events!



“One foot in front of the other...”

Did you know that Rhythmic Auditory Stimulation (RAS), one of the 19 standardized Neurologic Music Therapy techniques, is one of the six recognized forms of gait therapy (gait is a person's manner of walking) in the world?

Assuming Literacy

by Laura Hill, MM, MT-BC, NMT

A fundamental treatment principle at NMTSA is that of striving to promote the literacy of all persons served regardless of their ability to demonstrate their understanding through immediate communication or motor output. Often, therapists will utilize yes/no cards or word cards to assist choice-making, as well as written instructions ("control your body," "think about what you are doing," "stop," etc.) to assist a child exhibiting difficulties in spoken communication or self-regulation.

As soon as babies can focus their eyes, they are bombarded with written language. Words are everywhere; words are in books, on television, on street signs, on billboards, on DVDs and CDs. Although it may be difficult to determine exactly how a child absorbs language, the opportunities are endless. Some people read through word recognition, while others read through phonics, and many do both.

Too often, educators encounter students with communication difficulties and underestimate the child's learning potential. This can lead to lower expectations of the student's learning potential and thus a lack of a challenging curriculum. Recognizing this tendency, it then becomes the obligation of family, friends, and therapists to assume that accomplishments, such as reading and writing, are possible. The challenge for everyone involved is to be both optimistic and realistic; we must find the necessary accommodations for effective communication while avoiding the pitfalls of unfairly low expectations.

Assuming literacy in the home can be as simple as reading aloud with your child, therefore fostering an active engagement with printed words. Encouraging your child to look at age-appropriate books is another opportunity for the child to build reading skills. Homemade yes/no cards or choice-making cards can be as simple as a black marker and a 3x5 note card.

For more information regarding literacy, please ask your therapist for research articles and ask what he/she is doing to encourage the literacy of your child.

Parent Q&A

Q: What does deep pressure do for my child?

A: Deep pressure activates the proprioceptive neuro pathways in the body. Proprioception is the unconscious awareness of sensations coming from one's joints, muscles, tendons, and ligaments, giving the body a sense of position. The 'position sense' tells us about how we relate to our environment (Kranowitz, 1998). The function is to increase body awareness, and facilitate motor control and planning. (Answered by Rebecca Norton, MT-BC, NMT Fellow)

- Kranowitz, C.S. (1998). *The Out-of-Sync Child: Recognizing and coping with sensory integration dysfunction*. New York: Skylight Press.

Staff Spotlight:

Jennifer Hempel, MT-BC, NMT Fellow

Originally from South Dakota, **Jennifer Hempel** received her Bachelor's of Music in Music Therapy from the University of Minnesota after completing her clinical training requirements (six month internship program) at the Central Wisconsin Center for the Developmentally Disabled in Madison, Wisconsin, where she worked with adults and children with developmental delays.

Jennifer has provided music therapy services through NMTSA since July 2002. After taking some recent time off to care for her first child, Shaylyn, Jennifer has returned to work with the same passion and care. Welcome back Jennifer!

About our clinic...

NMTSA has been providing music therapy services to individuals and their families in the Phoenix metropolitan area since 1982. In 2001, following 20 years of providing home and community-based services, NMTSA opened a clinic in central Phoenix. The clinic allows NMTSA to serve more families, and to provide a center for support and networking opportunities for families and staff. The clinic also allows NMTSA to provide ongoing parent and staff education and training. With the inception of the NMTSA clinic came the opportunity to specialize in Neurologic Music Therapy (NMT).

Get In Touch

NMTSA Phone
602-840-6410

E-mail
info@nmtsa.org

To download this newsletter in electronic form go to our website at www.nmtsa.org

Attention: A reminder to all parents and caregivers waiting in the waiting room to please be mindful of the food and drinks brought into the clinic. Please do not leave any food or drink unattended, as we serve many clients with severe food allergies. Crumbs and unattended food present a potential health risk to some children. Also, we ask that you keep a careful watch on your children at all times while

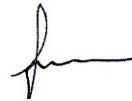
A Note From the Director...

Suzanne Oliver, MT-BC, NMT Fellow

The year has certainly gone by fast. One year ago we became Neurologic Music Therapy Services of Arizona in order to further define our mission to the community. We recently received our long awaited 501 (c) 3 status which will now allow us to forge further ahead with our vision for the company and you, our consumers. We appreciate your confidence in us and your support over the years. Please join us in celebrating one year as NMTSA and 25 years of service to the Phoenix community! We will be celebrating the anniversary in a variety of ways in the coming months.

We have some exciting things occurring in the year ahead as we move forward. With five years of growth here in the clinic, we have found it necessary to move to a larger facility in order to expand our services and provide your family members with an optimal therapeutic experience. In addition to expanding our clinical services, we will begin a small educational program for children with autism that incorporates our competency-based treatment philosophy and is being developed in cooperation with Intensive Therapy Programs, Inc. [Kris' Camp]. The ACT/Assuming Competence Today Program will provide a strong sensory foundation with a literacy-based approach to academics. The educational program will serve 8 children between 1st grade and 6th grade. If you are interested in learning more about the program, which will begin in February 2007, please talk with your therapist.

Thank you again for your commitment to providing quality services to your family. We look forward to a continued relationship with you as we grow together in community.



Announcements

Donations!

NMTSA is currently accepting donations! For a current list of all items needed please see the list posted in the waiting area or talk to your therapist. With the receipt of our federal tax ID, your donations can now be tax deductible. Checks may be made payable to Neurologic Music Therapy Services of Arizona, and may be mailed to the office (4201 N. 16th St. Ste. 110, Phoenix, AZ 85016) or given to your therapist. Please consider making a charitable donation to support our programming.

Fundraising!

Do you have knowledge or experience in fundraising? Do you possess a skill in grant writing? Do you have a gift in special events planning? NMTSA would like to invite you to share your knowledge and expertise with our agency as we look to expand our funding sources as a non-profit, 501 c 3 company. For more information or to sign up, please contact Rebecca Norton at rnorton@nmtsa.org or 602-277-8610 (box #2).

Volunteering!

NMTSA is looking for individuals willing to volunteer their time, expertise, or service. Please contact Amanda Ferguson at aferguson@nmtsa.org, or by calling the office at 602-277-8610 (box #2) to find out specific volunteer service opportunities.

Research Corner

Early Physiologic Markers Pave the Way for Early Diagnostic Testing of Autism

Compiled by Cami Smith, MT-BC, NMT Fellow

As researchers, doctors, and professionals learn more about Autism and its etiology, methods for diagnosing the condition may change. Currently autism is diagnosed using behavioral criteria, thus limiting the age at which reliable diagnoses can be made (autism is typically not diagnosed until the age of three). However, recent studies focusing on *biological markers* can help define autism subtypes and reveal potential therapeutic targets. In biology and medicine, a *biomarker* is a distinctive biological or biologically derived substance that can be used to indicate the presence or progress of a condition, or to measure the effects of treatment. The most commonly used biomarker initiative that Cure Autism Now (CAN) is investing in is metabolic profiling using lipid and urine analyses and investigating early physiologic markers such as motor function.

The use of early physiologic markers, such as motor function, is now paving the way for early diagnostic testing. Recent studies indicate a lack of certain motor reflexes in infants and children diagnosed on the autism spectrum, which may be used as an early indicator for future diagnosis. In one study of infants labeled at-risk for developmental disorders, researchers designed a tilt test as a diagnostic tool to test the reflex present in young babies to keep their heads vertical. As such a test is quick, easy, and capable of being a very early indicator of autism, CAN is pursuing whether motor tone and the tilt test, either alone or in combination with other metrics (such as changes in head circumference) may be an early "biomarker" for a subgroup of infants at risk for developing autism. This is a pilot study currently focusing on baby siblings of patients with ASD at the Neurodevelopmental Diagnostic Center for Young Children at George Washington University.

Adapted from: http://www.cureautismnow.org/site/c.bhLOK2PILuF/b.1191389/k.5944/Biomarker_Initiative.htm