

Musical dialogue groups during COVID19: Mission possible?

The school of musical dialogue started three years ago with the goal of training music therapists to lead musical dialogue groups with people from conflicting cultures (e.g., Arabs and Jews, religious and non-religious people, mothers and their adolescent daughters), and in the beginning of 2020, its graduates were involved in planning and conducting several such groups. However, with the outburst of COVID19, conditions in Israel were becoming less and less possible for conducting such face-to-face groups, and a full lockdown during March and April threatened to cut off even those groups that were on the verge of beginning.

In this presentation, we describe the musical dialogue groups that were eventually conducted in May, 2020, and onwards, despite the conditions that COVID19 forced upon us. Our deep feeling that the crisis was stirring even greater social tensions, led us to understand that musical dialogue groups were more necessary than ever, and to find ways to conduct them no matter what. We report of four such groups that took place with different conflicting groups – all through zoom. We tell about the adjustments we made, the differences between such groups and face-to-face ones, what we lost from this imposed social distancing, but more importantly – what we gained. One such gain was the ability to overcome geographical constraints which lead to the opening of our first international musical dialogue group for music therapists that were interested in implementing the concept in their countries.