

Beyond the Therapy Room: Empowering Parents Through Expressive Therapy Dyads

Expressive therapists commonly work directly with children while consulting separately with parents and caregivers. While this approach can effectively support emotional expression and regulation, it raises important ethical questions about where therapeutic safety and connection are located. When emotional growth occurs primarily within the therapist-child relationship, there is a risk that these experiences may not transfer into the child's everyday relationships.

This presentation explores these issues through a parent-child music therapy dyad case study involving a child experiencing low mood, emotional withdrawal, and difficulty communicating feelings. The case highlights the potential value of involving caregivers directly in expressive therapy to strengthen existing attachment relationships and create opportunities for emotional connection, co-regulation, and self-expression within the family system. The topic is significant because it addresses how expressive therapists can promote sustainable therapeutic outcomes while reducing the risk of therapeutic dependence and strengthening caregiver capacity.

Presenter: Dr Tanya Marie Silveira

Dr Tanya Marie Silveira is a Program Manager and Expressive Therapist with KidsXpress. She is also a Registered Music Therapist and the inaugural Australian Music Therapist of the Year (2020–2021).

Her PhD research explored how accessible music-making can improve hand function and wellbeing for stroke survivors, leading to an invitation to present at TEDxNewtown in 2019. She received the Helen Shoemark Award for Research Excellence (2022) and the Ruth Bright Award for Clinical Excellence (2018) presented by the Australian Music Therapy Association.

Tanya has presented nationally and internationally, appeared on *The Morning Show*, and published in journals including *The Nordic Journal of Music Therapy* and *The Australian Music Therapy Journal*. She has established music therapy programs in Australia and India and is passionate about improving access to creative therapies. As an Australian of Indian origin, she advocates for greater visibility, diversity, and representation in the profession and beyond.

Presenters Professional Affiliations

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