

## **Abstract**

This theoretical-empirical thesis is concerned with relatives of people with dementia and the use of music therapy as a therapeutic resource. The methodology of the thesis is hermeneutic in orientation and includes theoretical elements drawn from music therapy, existential psychology, and dementia research. It is based on the description, analysis and discussion of a multiple case study and a single case study of adult children of parents with Alzheimer's Disease who participated in group music therapy sessions implemented by the author. The music therapy form used was GIM (Guided Imagery Music) in the specific form of Group Music and Imagery (GrpMI). The data gathered from these music therapy sessions includes transcriptions of the 5 sessions and the participants drawings of their guided musical journeys.

The resulting theoretical understanding is that the relatives' challenges constitute elements of grief, crisis, and suffering through experiences of multiple change and loss, which can be summed up as anticipatory grief. The author arrives at an understanding of grief as an overall process consisting of different, but equally significant sub-processes whose internal ambivalence is a natural and a potential problematic precondition and a means for personal, existential growth.

The results of the empirical research have confirmed the theories of relatives' experiences of changes and loss and have shown a relationship between participants' life situations and therapeutic goals and yields. It is concluded that receptive group music therapy in the form of GrpMI can assist relatives of people with dementia in meeting and coping with the changes, loss and grief that they inevitably face by facilitating the creation of resources for living and learning through the anticipatory grief processes.