

2018

Understanding the Needs of Transgender Young Adults Dually Diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Depression

Elizabeth Whalen
Augsburg University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://idun.augsburg.edu/zyzzogeton>



Part of the [Music Therapy Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Whalen, Elizabeth, "Understanding the Needs of Transgender Young Adults Dually Diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Depression" (2018). *Zyzzogeton Posters*. 6.
<https://idun.augsburg.edu/zyzzogeton/6>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Undergraduate at Idun. It has been accepted for inclusion in Zyzzogeton Posters by an authorized administrator of Idun. For more information, please contact bloomber@aughsburg.edu.

Understanding the Needs of Transgender Young Adults Dually Diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Depression

Elizabeth Whalen, Lindsay Markworth, MM, MT-BC, & Emma Moonier, MS, LPCCC, MT-BC

Introduction

People with Autism Spectrum Disorder are more likely to identify as transgender. 5-10% of children with gender dysphoria meet diagnostic criteria for autism, versus 0.6% of the general population

The co-occurrence of autism and depression is high, around 50%. Few treatments exist for people with both diagnoses.

Transgender individuals frequently experience poor mental health.

Conclusion

The study contributed information to an under-researched body of knowledge.

While the participants' experiences provided valuable insight, the results of the research cannot be generalized.

Future research into the population and music therapy with the population is recommended.

Results

While meaningful individual themes emerged in each interview, global themes emerged between all participants.

The parents involved in the study wanted their children to gain happiness and self-acceptance. Their goal for therapy was to increase their children's quality of life, not change their children's behavior.

Participants reported feeling misunderstood in treatment experiences. They felt that treatment options were inappropriate for individuals with autism and mental health dual diagnosis.

Participants reported that social challenges led to feelings of suicidality.

Participants reported that a supportive therapist had a highly positive impact.

Methods

The participants in the study included one transgender young adult and one genderqueer young adult. Both young adults were diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. One parent of each young adult also participated.

Participants completed a semi-structured interview about their or their child's experiences with therapy and their hopes for therapy in the future.

The researcher transcribed the interviews and analyzed the transcripts through a phenomenological framework. This resulted in global themes and a distilled essence being drawn from the interviews.

Acknowledgements

The researcher would like to thank the study participants, Lindsay Markworth, Emma Moonier, and the Augsburg University URGO office for their support of the project.