

Rykov, M. H. (2006). [poster abstract]. "Getting by with a little help from my friends" meets "When I'm sixty-four." *Journal of Palliative Care* 22(3), 247.

A hermeneutic phenomenological qualitative inquiry of a music therapy support group for adult cancer patients explored the meaning of the experience from the participants' perspectives. The purpose was to gain an emic perspective of cancer patients' experience of music therapy support groups with the aim of better understanding the meaning of music therapy for them. The distinction between emic and etic perspectives originates from linguistics but is now used widely in sociology and anthropology to refer to accounts made from a stance indigenous or internal to a situation or language (*emic* account) and those made from a stance external to a situation or language, including the position of the observer or researcher (*etic* account). Participants were self-recruited from hospital and community cancer facilities by means of an invitation flyer. Ten adults aged 24 to 72 years participated in a music therapy cancer support group that met for two hours over eight consecutive weeks. Cancer types and disease stages were not homogenous. No previous music experience was necessary. Criteria for inclusion in the study was a desire for support of their cancer experience. The participants report that age is not a barrier to participation in the music therapy support group. Evidence for this finding will be shared from excerpts of music-making and transcribed statements. Unlike cancer support groups with a psychoeducational focus where the primary goal is dissemination of information, the experiential, music-centred focus of the music therapy support group diminished individual differences of age, gender, cancers and disease stage.