



## ISRAEL

### Country report on professional recognition of music therapy

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#### HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Music therapy in Israel is an active, developing and vibrant field. The profession received its recognition when the Israeli Association of Creative and Expressive Therapies (ICET) was founded in 1971. The ICET was founded by 10 members from different arts therapies; five of them were music therapists: Chava Sekeles, Shmuel Schpizer, Graciela Zandbak, Igal Gliksman and Varda Segev. The association includes the professions of art therapy, music therapy, dance-movement therapy, drama therapy, psychodrama and bibliotherapy, and stands as the only official association of arts therapies in Israel. Starting with a modest number of 10 members, the entire association counts nowadays 1200 professionals out of which 260 are music therapists. Since 1988, the association has been officially recognised by the Ministry of Health as a professional representative, and members are obligated to follow the rules and the code of ethics decided on by the association. The association has been in the continuous process of developing registration scale, professional standards and requirements for membership (Sandbank & Sekeles 1993).

In the early 1980s, three training programmes in music therapy were founded: The Music Therapy programme at David Yelin College, Jerusalem, was founded and headed by Chava Sekeles; The Music and Movement Therapy at Levinsky College of Education, Tel Aviv, was founded and headed by Dalia Razin; and the Music Therapy programme at Bar Ilan University, Ramat Gan, was founded and headed until today by Dorit Amir. In 2011 a fourth programme was founded at the Graduate School of Creative Arts Therapies at the University of Haifa, headed by Cochavit Elefant.

Sekeles was a pioneer in Israel to develop the idea of assessment in music therapy, and formulated the 'Developmental-Integrative Model in Music Therapy',

published in a book in 1996. Her wide contribution to the field of music therapy shaped the foundations of the profession both in Israel and abroad as a representative of the Israeli association at the European Music Therapy Confederation (EMTC) for 15 years.

Amir's book, *'Meeting the Sounds: Music Therapy – Practice, Theory and Research'*, published in 1999, is the only text-book written in Hebrew about the nature and essence of music therapy. With wide academic and clinical activities, Amir contributes as a writer, theoretician and supervisor for many music therapists in Israel. Amir is the only Professor in the field of music therapy in Israel.

Music therapists work within the Education Ministry in schools, kindergarten and special education centres, and within the Ministry of Health in hospitals and treatment centres. Music therapists also work in private treatment centres and private practices. Client-centred approaches, community music therapy and music therapy with families are common clinical approaches in Israel.

#### RECOGNITION AND APPROVAL

Back in the 1990s, the music therapy programme at Bar Ilan University was the only programme that awarded a Master's degree in music therapy. Today, all four programmes are authorised by the Council of Higher Education in Israel (the 'Malag'), and offer a Master's degree. The music therapy programme at Bar Ilan University has an outreach programme at the Michlala Charedit in Jerusalem, headed by Avi Gilboa. This was especially designed for religious women who hold a music therapy diploma and want to receive a Master's degree (Amir 2014). Music therapists who have successfully completed one of the approved training programmes in Israel are eligible for registration with the Israeli Association of Creative and Expressive Therapies (ICET), and are obligated to hold the highest professional level and code of ethics formulated by the association.

The professional title 'music therapist' is not yet protected by law in Israel. However, music therapists, as other arts therapists in Israel, attend supervision by the association's authorised supervisors.

#### IMPORTANT STEPS IN THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

In 1992, the Israeli Ministry of Health recognised the arts therapies as a profession, and gave it the title – "paramedical" profession; it was known as "creative and expressive therapies", and standards were formulated for receiving Recognition Status. The Ministry of Health issued Recognition Status Certificates retrospectively from 1988 to 2004, to all graduates from certified training programmes in Israel and abroad. This recognition was also the basis for employment by the Ministry of Education. In 2004, after the High Court of Justice cancelled the recognition of arts therapies as a profession and called for recognition by government law,

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the Ministry of Health ceased to issue Recognition Status Certificates for new arts therapists.

Up until today, there have been several attempts to achieve recognition by law. In the last attempt, in 2010, the Ministry of Health embraced the standards of the Council for Higher Education for this profession.

In 2013, the Council for Higher Education outlined the guidelines for “passage programmes”, for senior music therapists who do not have a Master’s degree; both Bar-Ilan University and the University of Haifa hold music therapy passage programmes for experienced music therapists who wish to achieve a Master’s degree.

In 2013, the proposal for recognition by law was formulated, but the unstable political atmosphere in Israel led to a scattering of the Knesset (the Israeli Parliament), followed by a new election. The process withdrew back a few steps.

The ICET works tirelessly towards our goal for recognition by law – both by strengthening the connection with politicians and by raising public awareness.

### Acknowledgements

Many thanks to the following colleagues for their help in providing materials for this article: Dr Chava Sekeles, Prof Dorit Amir, Edna Leshem, Dr Avi Gilboa, Dr Cochavit Elefant, Dr Miriam Druks and Dr Chava Weiss.

### SELECTED LINKS

- ❑ EMTC country report:  
<http://emtc-eu.com/country-reports/israel/>
- ❑ Israeli Association of Creative and Expressive Therapies (ICET):  
[www.yahat.org](http://www.yahat.org)

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