



**YOUR HEALTHCARE COMMUNITY LINK**  
Magazines • Web Sites • Custom Publishing • Job Fairs  
Conferences • Healthcare Shop • Custom Promotions

NOW HIRING THERAPY PROFESSIONALS **APPLY NOW!** Genesis Rehab Services

Login | Sign Up

 Search

[About Us](#) | [Advertise](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Contact](#) | [Work at ADVANCE](#)



Committed to helping therapists enhance their impact on the healthcare industry



**CURRENT PRINT ISSUE**

Subscriptions are **FREE** to Qualified Occupational Therapy Practitioners

MAGAZINE CAREERS PRODUCT INFO EDUCATION/EVENTS JOB FAIRS COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE SHOP CUSTOM PROMOTIONS

FROM OUR ARCHIVES

- [Go Back](#)
- [Search Archives](#)
- [E-Mail Article](#)
- [Printer-Friendly](#)

**Vol. 24 • Issue 8 • Page 18**  
**Drumming up Connections**

Rhythm makes inroads in child psychiatry

By John Scalici

Drumming and rhythm can be a powerful tool for reducing stress and anxiety, while simultaneously satisfying many of the goals of the occupational therapist during a given session.

In June 2005, I was contacted by VSA Arts of Alabama (a non-profit organization that provides opportunities in the arts for people with chronic illnesses) to facilitate outcome-based rhythm and drumming activities with adolescent and child psychiatric patients at Children's Hospital in Birmingham, AL. I initially met with Michelle Puckett, MS, OTR/L, and Lauren Hansell, MS, OTR/L, to discuss our goals and activities. These goals included:

- establishing positive peer interactions,
- learning sequencing skills,
- developing social skills,
- learning appropriate self-expression through the drum, and
- attending to task.

Because our groups frequently change, both by size and diagnosis types, we have established a protocol that gives us some consistency in measuring results.

Before each session, we have a briefing on any new dynamics that may be going on within the group. I gather as much information from this short meeting as possible.

To start the session, I introduce an ocean drum, a two-headed, thin instrument with metal beads inside, which when held level will produce the soothing sounds of the ocean. This activity establishes a few key concepts as we pass it from person to person:

- positive peer interaction;
- sequencing and coordination skills (taking the drum from one person, holding it balanced, experiencing it for an appropriate length of time, then passing it on); and
- using the metaphor of balance (when our emotions and feelings are in balance, then our lives come into balance). With the help of our OT team, we reinforce the idea of healthy expression of emotion to achieve balance. For some, attaining this balance means taking medication or continuing counseling.

Next, small percussion instruments are laid out inside the circle. Patients choose from instruments such as shakers, rattles, finger cymbals, bells and wooden frogs. As this is done, there is some chaos—another teachable moment! This is a good time to introduce some visual/verbal cues to help us control our "new voices" as well as practicing turn taking and appropriate peer interactions.

As we proceed with the activity, I explain that we will create a rhythm or sound with our new voices one at a time, as I make eye contact with the first person to my right or left. As I play a simple rhythm on my drum, I look

Search Articles

Search our archives for print and web articles.

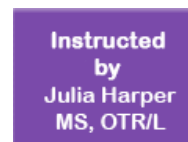
 


**Our Patients' Quality of Life is Our Measure of Success**

Career opportunities at [www.carilionclinic.com](http://www.carilionclinic.com)



Setting the New Standard for Neurorecovery.





**PUBLICATIONS** [Nurses](#) | [LPNs](#) | [Enterprise Imaging & Therapeutic Radiology Management](#) | [Imaging and Radiation Therapy Professionals](#) | [Directors in Rehabilitation](#) | [Physical Therapists & PT Assistants](#) | [Occupational Therapy Practitioners](#) | [Speech-Language Pathologists & Audiologists](#) | [Audiologists](#) | [Long-Term Care Management](#) | [Managers of Respiratory Care](#) | [Respiratory Care Practitioners](#) | [Administrators of the Laboratory](#) | [Medical Laboratory Professionals](#) | [Health Information Executives](#) | [Health Information Professionals](#) | [Nurse Practitioners](#) | [Physician Assistants](#) | [Healthy Aging](#) | [Sleep Medicine](#)

**SERVICES** [ADVANCE Healthcare Shop](#) | [ADVANCE Healthcare Shop Live](#) | [ADVANCE Custom Promotions](#) | [Healthcare Careers](#) | [Job Fairs](#) | [Online CE](#) | [ADVANCE Custom Publishing](#)

**CORPORATE** [About Us](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Work for ADVANCE](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Service](#)

© 2008 Merion Publications | 2900 Horizon Drive, King of Prussia, PA 19406 | 800-355-5627 | Publishers of ADVANCE Newsmagazines