

**10:15 am - 11:45 am**

**Concurrent Session 1E**

**\* A Cross-Cultural analysis of the Uses of Music in Grief Experiences:  
Considerations for Clinical Music Therapy Practice**

\*1.5 hours for Social Work CEU's will be given for this session.

**Speaker: Kaitlyn Kelly, MS, LCAT, MT-BC, Molloy University**

**Session Description:**

Many music therapists working in palliative, hospice, and bereavement care focus on the benefits that music can bring to people during one of the most challenging moments and experiences of their lives. We know that music therapists are not the only people to provide music during these moments in life. After completing a fairly comprehensive qualitative research study on the uses of music in grief experiences, it became clear that there are many parallels and new ideas to implement in our contemporary music therapy practice. Together, we will learn from healers and rituals across the globe and consider the impact these practices may have on our work in music therapy.

**Session Objectives**

Participants will:

1. Understand the parallels between cultural uses of music in grief rituals and in contemporary practice in music therapy.
2. Gain cultural insight into the many uses of music in grief experiences.
3. Apply the analysis of the research to their own clinical practice in music therapy.

**BIO**

Kaitlyn Kelly, MS, LCAT, MT-BC (she/her) began her career as a music educator and was deeply influenced by the impact music had on the relationships, motivations, and engagement of the children in her K-6 general music education classes. This, paired with the impact of her father's death, led her to pursue a career in music therapy. During her graduate training at Molloy College, Kaitlyn began focusing her clinical work in palliative and hospice care. Since graduating in 2013, Kaitlyn has continued serving and collaborating with people at the end of life and with the people who love them in music therapy. She has created three music therapy positions, an end-of-life music therapy position at a skilled nursing home in the Bronx, a hospice and bereavement music therapy position at East End Hospice, and collaborated with a fellow Molloy music therapy graduate in creating the music therapy program at Camp Good Grief.

Outside of the clinical work, Kaitlyn began her experiences in academic teaching in 2016 and has consistently been influencing and collaborating with students in the classroom ever since. After teaching as an adjunct faculty for two years, Kaitlyn went on to teach two full-time years at Molloy College from 2018-2020. Kaitlyn additionally taught one full-time year at SUNY New Paltz from 2023-2024 and is thrilled to be back at Molloy University as the Program Director for Undergraduate Music Therapy.

Kaitlyn is currently pursuing her PhD in Music Education with a focus in Music Therapy at New York University under the advisement of Ken Aigen. Her research largely focuses on end of life and grief experiences cross-culturally. She is interested in the impact of how music is involved in global society grieves. In learning more about these processes, she will connect the implications this may have on how music therapists come to their end of life and bereavement work honestly with cultural humility and openness.