

## ***OM SWEET OM: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF MULTICULTURAL AND MELODIC CHANTING AS A THERAPEUTIC MODALITY***

Irene Soléa Antonellis, MA, MT-BC, May 2009  
Lesley University, Cambridge

**Purpose:** This study explores group melodic and multicultural chanting and its effect on mood regulation and sense of well-being.

**Methods:** This research was conducted as a phenomenological study of eight graduate-level student subjects participating in a four-session private chanting group. Qualitative and quantitative data was collected via pre- and post-session questionnaires, researcher observations, journal writings, and audio recordings. Data was analyzed to determine the effect of group melodic and multicultural chanting on participant mood regulation and self-reported sense of wellbeing.

**Results:** Results support the use of group multicultural and melodic chanting for mood regulation, including increasing feelings of calm and relaxation, increasing feelings of peace and contentment, decreasing feelings of stress and anxiety, increasing sense of community, and increasing feelings of personal empowerment. Findings suggest that melodic chants in foreign languages may initially detract from participant subjective experience, and for some participants, the experience may expose latent hurt or trauma.

**Conclusions:** Adults with stress and anxiety symptomatology may benefit from repeated group melodic and multicultural chanting facilitated by a music therapist knowledgeable in traditional and contemporary chanting practices. Further investigation is required to determine whether the application of group melodic and multicultural chanting is relevant to both health-and-wellness and clinical contexts (i.e. Dialectical Behavioral Therapy practices).