

# การบททวนขอบเขตวรรณกรรมเกี่ยวกับกิจกรรมดนตรีชุมชนสำหรับวัยรุ่นและผู้ใหญ่ตอนต้นกลุ่มอหิสติกสเปกตรัม

## A Scoping Review of Community Music Projects for Adolescents and Young Adults with ASD

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### บทคัดย่อ

การเปลี่ยนผ่านจากวัยเรียนเป็นความท้ายสำหรับวัยรุ่นโดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งวัยรุ่นที่เป็นโรคอหิสติกสเปกตรัม (Autism Spectrum Disorder: ASD) การปรับตัวของวัยรุ่นจะยากยิ่งขึ้น หากไม่ได้รับการดูแลต่อเนื่องโดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งหากการดูแลหยุดชะงักไป จะยิ่งทำให้ปัญหาที่วัยนักมากยิ่งขึ้น กิจกรรมดนตรีชุมชนเป็นวิธีการหนึ่งที่จะช่วยเหลือเยียวยาวัยรุ่นที่เป็นโรคอหิสติกสเปกตรัมกำลังปรับตัว และเปลี่ยนผ่านสังคมจากโรงเรียนเข้าสู่วัยทำงาน งานวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาแนวปฏิบัติของ กิจกรรมดนตรีชุมชนในปัจจุบัน เพื่อศึกษาข้อบ่งชี้และนำเสนอข้อมูลเชิงปฏิบัติสำหรับนักบำบัดดนตรี ผู้นำชุมชน และผู้ให้บริการดูแล โดยบททวนวรรณกรรมที่เกี่ยวข้องเกี่ยวกับโครงการดนตรีชุมชนสำหรับ วัยรุ่นและผู้ใหญ่ที่เป็น ASD จากการคัดกรองผลการศึกษาที่เกี่ยวข้องทั้งหมด 784 บทความ พบร่วมี บทความซึ่งเป็นไปตามเกณฑ์การคัดกรอง 15 บทความ ผลการวิจัยพบว่ามีการรายงานกิจกรรมดนตรี ชุมชนในสหรัฐอเมริกาเป็นส่วนใหญ่ ลักษณะของกิจกรรมมีความหลากหลาย วัยรุ่นและวัยผู้ใหญ่ตอนต้น มีความต้องการกิจกรรมดนตรีชุมชน กลยุทธ์ของการนำไปใช้กิจกรรมดนตรีชุมชนจะเป็นแนวทางที่มี คุณค่าสำหรับการวิจัยในอนาคต การวิเคราะห์เชิงลึกแสดงให้เห็นถึงการมีส่วนร่วมของกระบวนการในการ จัดกิจกรรมทางดนตรีซึ่งให้ผลลัพธ์ที่ช่วยให้วัยรุ่นสามารถปรับตัวได้ดีขึ้น และควรได้รับการพัฒนาเพื่อการ วิจัยต่ออยู่ด้านอนาคตเพื่อประโยชน์ที่จะเกิดขึ้นต่อไป

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# A Scoping Review of Community Music Projects for Adolescents and Young Adults with ASD

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## Abstract

The transition after graduation poses significant psychosocial challenges for adolescents with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), often exacerbated by the immediate cessation of services and support. Community music projects are one way to support and help adolescents with autism spectrum disorder who are adjusting and transitioning from school to the workforce. This study aimed to explore the current practices of community music projects, examine the indications, and provide practical information for music therapists, community leaders, and care providers by reviewing relevant literature on community music projects for adolescents and adults with ASD. Out of 784 studies screened, 15 met the inclusion criteria. The research findings revealed that community music projects were primarily reported in the United States. The nature of the projects was diverse, and adolescents and young adults had a demand for community music projects. The strategies for implementing these projects offered valuable insights for future research. The in-depth analysis demonstrated the involvement of the process in organizing music projects, which resulted in outcomes that helped adolescents adapt better. These strategies should be further developed for future research to continue benefiting future generations.

**Keywords:** community music projects, autism spectrum disorder, adolescents, young adults

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## Introduction

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental condition characterized by challenges in social interaction, communication, and repetitive behaviors (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). As the prevalence of ASD rises, the need for policies supporting specialized education and therapeutic services becomes increasingly important (Kulage, Goldberg, Usseglio, Romero, Bain, & Smaldone, 2020, p. 2120). However, many individuals lose access to these resources after graduation (Laxman, Taylor, DaWalt, Greenberg, & Mailick, 2019, p. 917).

Without necessary support, many individuals with ASD face persistent challenges in social communication and emotional regulation (Poon, 2012, pp. 135-138), leading to reduced activity participation and isolation (Lounds Taylor, Adams, & Bishop, 2017, p. 669). This impacts their overall well-being (World Health Organization, 2001) and increases the risk of developing physical and mental health issues (Curnow, Rutherford, Maciver, Johnston, Prior, Boilson, Shah, Jenkins, & Meff, 2023, pp. 23).

Post-graduation interventions for individuals with ASD must support their unique needs and promote community involvement. Unfortunately, access to essential services, such as employment and residential support is far below demand (Gerhardt & Lainer, 2011, pp. 39-43). Transition programs often lack collaboration between schools, agencies and families, limiting the availability of support (Laxman, Taylor, DaWalt, Greenberg, & Mailick, 2019, p. 917). Even when accepted in programs, many receive inadequate support (Murphy, Beadle-Brown, Wing, Gould, Shah, & Holmes, 2005, p. 416), and few programs are research-supported (Curnow, Rutherford, Maciver, Johnston, Prior, Boilson, Shah, Jenkins, & Meff, 2023, p. 24). Improving community participation during the transition to adulthood is therefore crucial.

Community music projects have shown to benefit young people with ASD, promoting personal and social outcomes, such as enhanced self-awareness, musical interests and skills, reduced anxiety, and stronger social connections (Corbett et al., 2014, pp. 11-12; Thompson, Hayward, & Raine, 2022, pp. 33-37). The literature documents various community music projects for adolescents and young adults with ASD, including ensemble and theatre performances (Bakan, 2014; Brandalise, 2015), music-making with voice and instruments (Young, 2020), and the use of music technology (Greher, Hillier, Dougherty, & Poto, 2010, p. 9).

Yi and Kim's (2023) scoping review highlights the wide applicability of community music projects for well-being. Similarly, substantial literature exists on such projects for

adolescents and young adults with ASD, although styles, contexts, and approaches vary. This paper aims to provide a systematic summary of community music projects for individuals aged 13 to 29 with ASD, enhancing understanding for therapists and community leaders, guiding current practices, and inspiring new innovative approaches. A scoping review, incorporating a broad spectrum of sources (Peters, Godfrey, McInerney, Munn, Tricco, & Khalil, 2020) was selected as the most suitable method to address the research questions posed in this study.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the existing studies of community music projects for adolescents and young adults with ASD?
2. What are the implementation characteristics and strategies of these projects catered to this population?

## **Materials and Methods**

### **Data Sources and Search Strategy**

This scoping review aimed at identifying on community-based music projects for adolescents and young adults with ASD. Peer-reviewed articles, theses and other unpublished sources were considered also. The search included electronic databases, such as Academic Search Ultimate, PubMed, and ERIC. Hand searches included reference lists of included studies and tables of content from music therapy journals including Australian Journal of Music Therapy, Journal of Music Therapy, Nordic Journal of Music Therapy, and Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy.

The search terms included: (“community” or “ecological”) and (“music therapy” or “music intervention” or “music activities” or “choir” or “band” or “orchestra”) and (“autism” or “ASD” or “autism spectrum disorder” or “autistic” or “asperger”) and (“adolescents” or “teenagers” or “high school” or “young adults”). These terms were searched as keywords, titles, abstracts, and MeSH.

### **Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

The inclusion and exclusion criteria are presented in Table 1. This review focuses on English publications from the past 15 years to ensure up-to-date relevance. Foundational work by Ansdell (2002); Stige (2002); and Pavlievic and Ansdell (2004) framed early concepts of community music therapy (CoMT), which has expanded during the 2010s (Stige, 2015, p. 236). Narrowing the scope of this review to the last 15 years captures the

evolution of CoMT interventions, reflecting contemporary societal needs and advancements in the field.

**Table 1** Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

| Item         | Inclusion Criteria                                                                 | Exclusion Criteria                                           |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Participants | Participants aged 13-29 with ASD/Asperger's recruited for community music projects | Studies on music projects that was not open to the community |
| Concept      | Mainly used group-based music interventions in the community                       | Mainly used music interventions for educational outcomes     |
| Context      | Studies that describe implementation strategies and goals of the music projects    |                                                              |

### **Study Selection Process**

Initially, 802 records were identified, with 784 remaining after duplicates were removed. Next, abstracts and titles were screened based on inclusion criteria, and 15 articles were eventually included in the review, as detailed in Figure 1, following Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews guidelines (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, & Altman, 2010, p. 339).

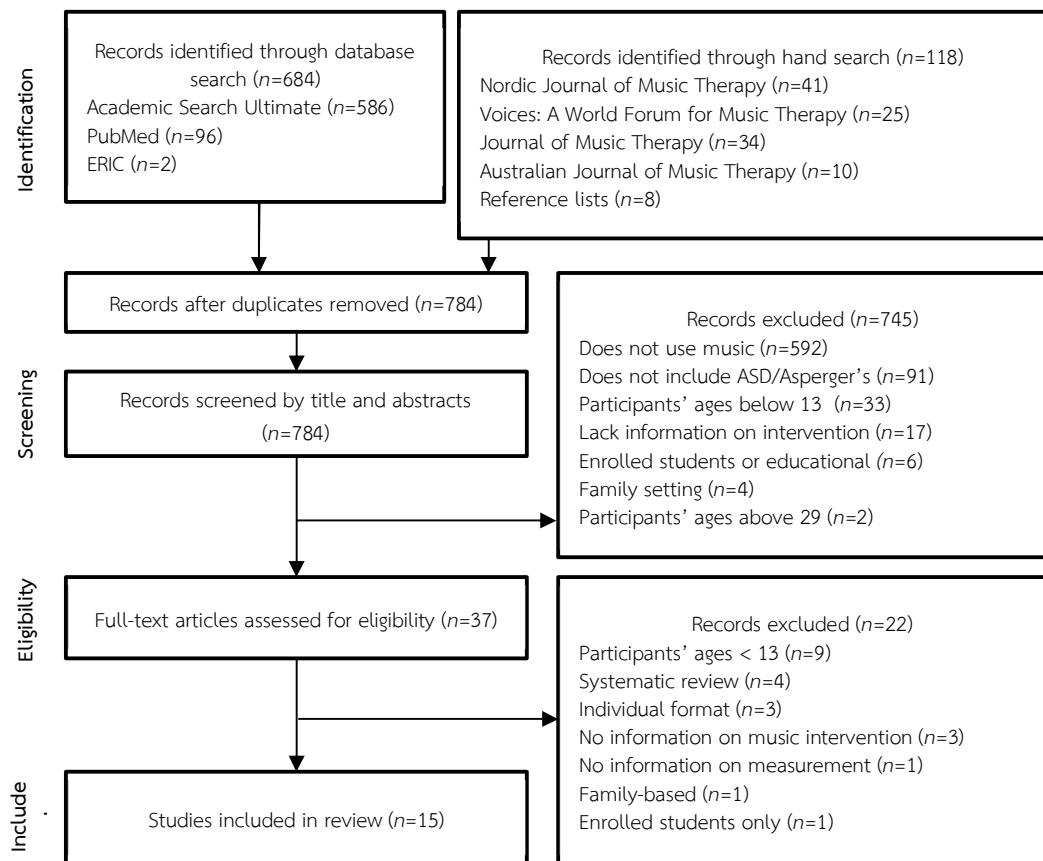
### **Data Extraction and Analysis**

Data were extracted using an Excel sheet modeled after Lee's (2013, p. 10) systematic review, capturing study characteristics (e.g. authors, year, location) and implementation characteristics (e.g. goals, music interventions, outcomes). The data were categorized, tabulated, and analyzed, with descriptive statistics for key variables.

## **Results**

### **Study Characteristics**

Key Characteristics. Of the 15 included studies, most were conducted in America ( $n=10$ ). Detailed key study characteristics were provided in Table 2.

**Figure 1** Flow Diagram of the Study Selection Process

**Participant Characteristics.** The majority of participants had ASD-related diagnoses ( $n=13$ ). However, two studies (Shiloh & LaGasse, 2014, pp. 116-117; Fogle & Scott, 2023) did not specify the diagnoses but focused on sensory-friendly concerts (SFCs). The participants' ages ranged widely (8-38 years) with a focus on adolescents and young adults. Participants represented local communities ( $n=7$ ), organizations serving individuals with ASD ( $n=4$ ), music-based groups or organizations ( $n=4$ ).

**Key Characteristics of Music Projects.** Music therapists were the most common facilitators ( $n=8$ ), followed by professional musicians and music students. The studies identified nine types of music activities: ensemble, theater, performance, recording, audience member, music-making, music and dance, group singing, and music learning. All except two studies utilized multiple types of activities. Music-making was the most common activity ( $n=12$ ), followed by performance and recording.

## Implementation Characteristics

Implementation characteristics, including goal areas, and implementation strategies and accommodations were summarized in Table 3.

Goals. Most studies targeted multiple goal areas. The most common were social goals (n=6), followed by community inclusion and self-expression (n=5).

Implementation Strategies and Accommodations. In terms of music strategies, the studies utilized various music types (familiar, preferred, original, improvised, self-composed) and instrument types (multicultural and music technology), selected carefully for specific objectives. Accommodations included providing earplugs, avoiding PA systems, and using online platforms for sound and environment control. Regarding planning and facilitation strategies, ten projects used structured approaches with defined sequence or final outputs, while the remaining used more flexible, participant-led methods. Participant involvement varied widely, with eight studies providing high levels of involvement in musical creation and performances, five studies offering control over selecting music activities and reflection sharing, and two studies following a set plan.

**Table 2** Summary of Study Characteristics

| Author(s) (Year)                                     | Country | Participants |     | Facilitators                         | Music Activity Types |     |     |     |    |    |    |    |
|------------------------------------------------------|---------|--------------|-----|--------------------------------------|----------------------|-----|-----|-----|----|----|----|----|
|                                                      |         | Age          | Dx  |                                      | Ens                  | The | Pef | Rec | AM | Mm | MD | GS |
| Bakan (2014)                                         | America | Child        | ASD | Author, musicians                    | X                    |     | X   |     |    |    |    | X  |
| Brandalise (2015)                                    | Brazil  | Young adults | ASD | Music therapists, peers              |                      | X   | X   |     |    |    |    | X  |
| Corbett et al. (2014)                                | America | 8-17y        | ASD | Theatre director, peers              |                      | X   | X   |     |    | X  |    | X  |
| Fogle and Scott (2023)                               | America | NS           | NS  | Authors, SPED teacher                |                      |     |     |     |    | X  |    |    |
| Hillier, Greher, Poto, and Dougherty (2012)          | America | 13-29y       | HFA | Music education, psychology students |                      | X   | X   |     |    | X  |    |    |
| Hillier, Greher, Queenan, Marshall, and Kopec (2016) | America | 13-29y       | HFA | Music education, psychology students |                      | X   | X   | X   | X  |    |    |    |

**Table 2** Summary of Study Characteristics (Cont.)

| Author(s) (Year)                                                        | Country   | Participants |            | Facilitators                       | Music Activity Types |     |     |     |    |    |    |    |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|--------------|------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|-----|-----|-----|----|----|----|----|-----|
|                                                                         |           | Age          | Dx         |                                    | Ens                  | The | Pef | Rec | AM | Mm | MD | GS | Lrn |
| Lehmann-Kuit, Short, and Catanzaro (2023)                               | Australia | 23y          | ASD        | Music therapists, musicians        |                      |     |     |     | X  |    | X  |    |     |
| Low, McFerran, Viega, Carroll-Scott, McGhee Hassrick, and Bradt, (2023) | America   | 18-29y       | ASD        | Nordoff-Robbins music therapists   |                      |     |     |     |    |    | X  |    |     |
| Marrero (2012)                                                          | America   | 15y          | ASD        | Musicians                          | X                    |     |     |     |    |    | X  |    |     |
| Mateos-Moreno and Atencia-Doña (2013)                                   | Spain     | M = 25y      | Severe ASD | Music therapist or DMT, assistants |                      |     |     |     |    |    | X  | X  |     |
| McDonald, Codrea, and Gavin (2015)                                      | Ireland   | 16-18y       | ASD or PD  | Authors                            |                      | X   | X   |     | X  |    |    | X  |     |
| Schwartzberg and Silverman (2013)                                       | America   | 9-21y        | ASD        | Music therapist, staff             |                      |     |     |     |    |    |    | X  |     |
| Shiloh and LaGasse (2014)                                               | America   | NS           | NS         | Trained SFC facilitators           |                      |     |     |     |    |    | X  |    |     |
| Thompson, Hayward, and Raine (2022)                                     | Australia | 18-25y       | ASD, PD    | Music therapist, music students    |                      |     |     |     |    |    |    | X  |     |
| Young (2020)                                                            | Canada    | 21-38y       | HFA        | Music therapist                    |                      |     |     |     | X  |    | X  | X  | X   |

Note. AM: Audience member concerts or performances; Dx: Diagnosis; DMT: Dance/Movement therapist; Ens: Ensemble; GS: Group singing; HFA: High-functioning ASD; Lrn: Learning of music instruments; MD: Music and Dance; Mm: Music-making; NS: Not specified; PD: Psychological disorders; Pef: Performance; Rec: Recording; The: Theatre.

**Table 3** Summary of Implementation Characteristics

| Title (Author(s), year)                                                                 | Goals      | Implementation Strategies and Accommodations                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                         |                         |                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                         |            | Music                                                                                                                                                                      | Planning & Facilitation                                                                                                                                 | Participant involvement |                                                                                                                                   |
| Autism: Responding Together In Sound and Movement (ARTISM) (Bakan, 2014; Marrero, 2012) | CI; SE; WB | Utilize safe, high-yield, multicultural instruments; highlight participant-created works and improvisations; encourage composing with household items and preferred music. | Involve parents in rehearsals; organise public performances to promote recognition of ASD musicians; use both live and recorded music as accommodations |                         | Collaborate with adult musicians for improvised works and public performances; build musical independence and self-accommodations |

**Table 3** Summary of Implementation Characteristics (Cont.)

| Title<br>(Author(s),<br>year)                                                                                                                                                                   | Goals            | Implementation Strategies and Accommodations                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                  | Music                                                                                                                                                                                 | Planning & Facilitation                                                                                                                                                                                          | Participant<br>involvement                                                                                                                                                                |
| Sensory-friendly<br>concerts (SFC)<br>& Virtual SFC<br>(V-SFC)<br>(Fogle and<br>Scott, 2023;<br>Shiloh and<br>LaGasse, 2023)                                                                    | CI               | SFC: Provide access to live music, instruments for musicking, and earplugs; avoid PA systems<br>V-SFC: Use recorded performances with adjustable volume and instrument demonstrations | SFC: Provide open, sensory-friendly spaces for calming, sensory needs, and self-expression; offer multiple intermissions with trained facilitators.<br>V-SFC: Offer multiple intermissions guided by caregivers. | SFC: Attend in-person, interact with the space, music, musicians, and audience members, and complete surveys<br>V-SFC: Attend virtually, participate in discussions, and complete surveys |
| “SoundScape”<br>(Hillier, Greher,<br>Poto, and<br>Dougherty,<br>2012; Hillier,<br>Greher,<br>Queenan,<br>Marshall, and<br>Kopec, 2016)                                                          | SE;<br>SD;<br>SO | Share favorite songs and identify musical elements; improvise using instruments, household items, or music apps; compose for videos and art                                           | Use weekly structure; weeks 1-2: socialize, listen, explore music; weeks 3-4: build composition skills; weeks 5-7: compose; week 8-9: perform                                                                    | Make music and compose on own and in groups, interact with peers and perform together to peers, family, and friends                                                                       |
| “This Is Me”<br>(Thompson,<br>Hayward, and<br>Raine, 2022)                                                                                                                                      | SO;<br>WB        | Use various music-making and receptive music experiences; provide songs and instruments according to interests and skills                                                             | Use flexible structure for group decision-making to plan each session (include chosen music activities and active music-making)                                                                                  | Develop session plan as a group; engage in active and receptive music experiences                                                                                                         |
| Theatre<br>(Brandalise,<br>2015; Corbett<br>et al., 2014)                                                                                                                                       | CI;<br>SE;<br>SO | Use group musicking, lyric writing to compose and arrange character soundtracks in collaboration with a live band; incorporate music and movement games                               | Use structured approach (e.g. 9-step sequence, designed activities) for play creation and preparation; offer daily schedules, trained peers, script writing; organise performances at theaters                   | Create characters, story, soundtracks, script, and props; perform the play                                                                                                                |
| Reflection on<br>music therapy<br>experiences<br>(Lehmann-<br>Kuit, Short,<br>and<br>Catanzaro,<br>2023; Low,<br>McFerran,<br>Viega, Carroll-<br>Scott, McGhee<br>Hassrick, and<br>Bradt, 2023) | SD               | Engage in collaborative music-making or recreating songs, facilitating discussions and reflections for bonding and processing emotions                                                | Led by music therapists (including those trained in NRMT); use group sessions for bonding, by grouping clients by age, and individual sessions for personal goals                                                | Participate in reflection and collaboration in therapeutic music-making                                                                                                                   |

**Table 3** Summary of Implementation Characteristics (Cont.)

| Title<br>(Author(s),<br>year)                                                                      | Goals     | Implementation Strategies and Accommodations                                                                                 |                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                    |           | Music                                                                                                                        | Planning & Facilitation                                                                                                | Participant<br>involvement                                                                        |
| Orff-based<br>music & dance<br>activities<br>(Mateos-<br>Moreno and<br>Atencia-Doña,<br>2013)      | SO        | Use Orff approach;<br>select and adapt<br>familiar songs for each<br>activity; use background<br>classical music             | Use structure with 8<br>activities per session,<br>ending with a closing<br>activity; split time<br>between MT and DMT | Participate in various<br>dance and music activities                                              |
| Peer-based<br>composition &<br>performance<br>program<br>(McDonald,<br>Codrea, and<br>Gavin (2015) | SO; WB    | Share favorite music;<br>learn to play<br>instruments; compose,<br>record, and perform<br>own music composition              | Peer-based; use weekly<br>structure wk 1-4: learn<br>instruments and<br>compose music; wk 5-8:<br>record and perform   | Interact with peers; learn<br>to play instruments,<br>compose, record, and<br>perform             |
| Singing &<br>Voice-focused<br>recording<br>project<br>(Young, 2020)                                | SE;<br>SD | Warm up creatively;<br>express mood with<br>singing and gestures;<br>practice repertoire;<br>resolve issues through<br>music | Maintain a consistent<br>structure; empower<br>soloists with the use of<br>microphones                                 | Share warm-up ideas;<br>share ideas, practice, and<br>record for project; review<br>after 4 weeks |
| Social skills<br>development<br>(Schwartzberg<br>and Silverman,<br>2013)                           | SO        | Use greeting songs,<br>musical instruments,<br>movement; pair social<br>stories with original<br>music in major keys         | Maintain a consistent<br>structure; use unfamiliar<br>music for learning<br>targeted social skills                     | Participate in music<br>activities and sing along to<br>songs used for social<br>stories          |

Note. SO: Social-related; CI: Community inclusion; SE: Self-expression; SD: Self-discovery and reflection; WB: wellbeing

## Conclusion & Suggestions

### Summary of findings

Out of 784 studies initially screened, 15 met the inclusion criteria for this review. Most were predominantly carried out in the USA in the past 15 years, utilized a diverse range of research methodologies and published in journals on music therapy, music education, community music, psychology, and autism. The community music projects with ASD were thoroughly examined and the synthesis revealed that the goals and outcomes aligned with their post-graduation needs. This suggests the practicality and applicability of tailored community music projects in promoting participation and community engagement for individuals with ASD. Additionally, the implementation

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strategies and outcomes listed offer valuable direction and information for future research and community music projects.

### **Limitations**

The study presents some inherent limitations. Firstly, the predominantly US-based studies limit global perspectives, highlighting the need for geographically diverse research. Secondly, varied methodologies across studies hinder direct comparisons and definitive conclusions. Thirdly, reliance on self-reported data, which may be less reliable for this population, suggests the need for broader data sources. Lastly, language restrictions and specific keywords used may have excluded relevant studies, narrowing the scope. Community music projects focusing on music needs or skills training are beyond the scope of this study.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

The suggestions include: 1) expanding research globally to incorporate diverse perspectives; 2) using mixed methods research; 3) conducting longitudinal studies to understand long-term impacts; 4) exploring various projects to enhance resources for ASD individuals; 5) improving interagency collaboration for better access to such programs and services; and 6) comparing methods, venues, strategies, activities, and accommodations to develop specific protocols for these community music projects.

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