

**Building Community and Exploring Identity through Culturally Focused Music-Making
for Biracial Filipino/a/x Americans in the United States**

By

Jessica Steinhebel, MA, MT-BC/L-OR

Advisor: Dr. Susan Hadley, Ph.D., MT-BC

Reader: Gabrielle Banzon, MA, LPMT, MT-BC

Reader: Timothy Little Trần, DMA

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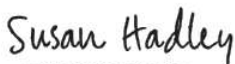
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Jessica Steinhebel, MA, MT-BC/L-OR

Presented to the
Slippery Rock University
Music Therapy Program

Signed by:



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Susan Hadley, Ph.D., MT-BC, Thesis Advisor

Signed by:



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Gabrielle Banzon, MA, LPMT, MT-BC, Reader

Signed by:



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Timothy Little Trần, DMA, Reader

ABSTRACT

This qualitative focus group study explores the use of music in building community and exploring themes of identity for biracial Filipino/a/x Americans, while also introducing participants to cultural values. Participants included three individuals (pseudonyms: Aurora, Lynn, and Kim) who all identify as biracial or multi-ethnic Filipinos. Aurora participated in all six music therapy sessions. Lynn participated in the first session. Kim was only able to participate in music therapy sessions two and three, due to having to start fall term for her second year of music therapy studies.

The first four sessions focused on a pre-colonial Filipino/a/x cultural value: Kapwa [Kap-wa] (shared interconnectedness), Utang Ng Loob [Oo-tang-ng-la-oh-oh-b] (debt of gratitude), Hiya [Hee-yuh] (shame), and Pakikisama [Pah-kee-kee-sahmah] (harmony with others). The fifth session involved a recap of the previous sessions and discussion of a topic related to lived experiences that occurred the week after the previous session. Session 6 focused on a recap of the cultural values that were explored and resulted in a songwriting session focusing on Hiya.

Findings indicated that participants felt a closer connection to their biracial Filipino/a/x identity by being in a space with other participants who also identified as biracial Filipino/a/x, creating a space to be authentic and vulnerable, and utilizing music as a focused tool to explore identity.

An implication of this study is that music therapy is an untapped allied health care resource for the Filipino community. Additionally, there is a need for biracial Asian and Filipino healthcare providers. Currently, to my knowledge there are only two Filipino board-certified music therapists in the state of Oregon both of which are biracial, including the investigator. Future studies should continue to explore the nuanced experiences of biracial Filipino/a/x

individuals, with an emphasis on expanding sample sizes, incorporating intergenerational perspectives, the duality of identity, and deepening cultural specificity in therapeutic practices.

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There are so many people who have supported my efforts in not only getting through graduate school, but specifically through this study. Exploring biracial Filipino/a/x identity is part of my own identity journey. It was not until this study that I started to take steps toward reclaiming my Filipina heritage.

Thank you to my Nanay (Mom), who travelled from a country where she was part of the majority for the first 21 years of her life and came to a place where she has been a minority for the last 45 years. She instilled Filipino culture through the oral traditions of Filipino recipes where all of us kids were well fed and learned recipes by heart, shared folklore-based beliefs that instilled my love of science fiction and encouraged a love for music that is part of my Filipino DNA. She found her Filipino community in Kitsap County-Washington and continues to be an active member embodying Kapwa. *Salamat sa pagiging walang takot* (Thank you for being fearless).

To my partner, Varian. Thank you for supporting all the last-minute schedule changes, keeping our little one entertained and safe while I worked on this thesis and through the entire graduate program. I hope reading this study will give you more insight into my biracial Filipina identity and culture.

To my son, Eros. I hope that one day you will read this and know that you are Filipino enough.

Salamat po (Thank you very much), ate Lyn Rush. Without you, I am not sure I would have had any participants in this study. Thank you for always embodying kapwa in all you do for our Filipino/a/x community and always willing to connect and be an advocate for others.

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Introduction

After moving to Portland, Oregon, I experienced a sense of otherization within the Filipino community, particularly during the Jade District festival. When I approached a table hosted by a Filipino club and asked about membership, the response was brusque: "Why?" After explaining I was half Filipino, the person's attitude became more welcoming, surprising me since I had never felt the need to assert my identity before in the Filipino community. This encounter marked my first experience of exclusion within the Filipino community, leaving me uncertain about future interactions.

As a biracial Filipina American who is perceived as white depending on who I am engaging with, it was always easy to accept the white aspect of my identity. However, within the Bremerton, Washington Filipino community where I grew up, I have consistently been recognized as biracial or "mestiza." My biracial identity has afforded me a degree of fluidity between both communities. Although I have been surrounded by Filipino culture, I often felt disengaged due to my lack of proficiency in the language. Nevertheless, I was welcomed and felt a sense of belonging growing up in Bremerton, despite this linguistic barrier.

I have experienced otherization from both sides of my identity. My white American father discouraged my brothers and me from learning Tagalog and Visayan, convincing our trilingual mother that it would hinder our English skills. As a result, she translated for us at Filipino events. Although born in Zambales, Philippines, and a US citizen and eligible for Filipino citizenship by birth, I was raised to identify solely as American. It was not until my first year of graduate study in music therapy at Slippery Rock University that I realized I had been deprived not just of my mother's native language, but of my own.

This realization prompted my curiosity about whether other biracial Filipino/a/x Americans also experience a disconnect from their Filipino identity and community due to language barriers. Given that music is integral to Filipino culture, it seemed fitting for a board-certified music therapist to explore how music can serve as a bridge to reconnect biracial Filipino/a/x Americans with their cultural identities while facilitating language acquisition. To date, there has been no music therapy research that focuses on the experiences of biracial Filipino/a/x members of the community.

Identity does not exclusively emerge from a single cultural framework, as individuals may navigate multiple cultural influences (Ferguson, 2016). In the United States, the predominance of white culture can significantly shape how biracial Filipino individuals engage with and embrace their Filipino identity. Additionally, a biracial Filipino/a/x person's self-identification within the Filipino community may be influenced by their level of connection and involvement in that community. Biracial Filipinos often inhabit an ambiguous and ambivalent space between cultures, leading to a dual existence that fosters ongoing internal conflict. Experiences of language loss through assimilation and acculturation, conflicts stemming from multiple cultural identities, and the phenomenon of otherization contribute to feelings of disconnection from their Filipino identity among many biracial Filipino Americans. While there has been some research exploring the biracial Filipino experience, there is a notable gap in studies that focus on the use of music therapy as a primary modality for connecting with and reclaiming Filipino identity.

Definitions of Terms

Considering the linguistic and historical complexity, it is essential to carefully examine the terminology used to describe members of the Filipino/a/x community in this study. While recognizing the presence of multiracial identities within the Filipino diaspora, this research specifically focused on “biracial” Filipinos within the Filipino/a/x framework. For the purposes of this study, “biracial” is defined as individuals with one parent of fully ethnically Filipino/a/x descent and one parent of a different ethnic background, regardless of their place of birth.

Within the Filipino community, terms such as “mestiza” and “mestizo” have historically been employed to describe biracial individuals, reflecting the influences of Spanish and American colonization (Molnar, 2017; Nadal, 2004; Nadal, 2021). However, I have opted to use the term “biracial” to distance this study from the implications of colonized language.

The choice between using “Filipinx” or “Filipino” throughout this study also warrants consideration. “Filipinx” is a contemporary term that encompasses individuals within the Filipino community, regardless of gender, including members of the LGBTQ+ community (Hernandez, 2020). First appearing in 2010, it derives from the term “Latinx” and has gained traction primarily among younger Filipinos in the United States. This terminology has, however, generated tension between younger and older generations, as well as among those native to the Philippines. Critics of the term often attribute its emergence to Western influence (Ching, 2020; Contreras, 2020). Furthermore, the use of the suffix “x” does not align with the Philippine linguistic system.

Compounding this complexity is the fact the Philippine linguistic system is fundamentally gender- and sex-neutral, lacking gender-specific pronouns (Villarta, 2020). The legacies of Spanish and American colonization have introduced certain gender-conforming

terms, such as Filipino and Filipina, as well as Pinoy and Pinay. Additionally, there is a prevailing notion that Filipino Americans may adopt the term “Filipinx” to further distance themselves from their Filipino heritage.

The Philippines is home to over 150 distinct dialects. In addition to English, Tagalog serves as one of the official languages of the country. Although a sizable portion of the population speaks various Visayan dialects, Tagalog was selected as the official language primarily due to the availability of literature and the perception that Tagalogs were more educated and literate (Llamzon, 1968). Tagalog was officially designated as the national language in 1987 and is widely used among Filipino communities in the United States, often in conjunction with English at cultural events (Cornell University, 2023). Given the influence of colonization on the Philippine language and the inherently gender- and sex-neutral nature of its dialects, I will employ “Filipino” as the general term to describe members of the community and “Filipino/a/x” when discussing individual identities, unless otherwise specified.

Purpose of Study

This research study aims to explore how music therapy can foster cultural connection for biracial Filipino/a/x individuals living in the United States by teaching basic Tagalog through music-making. The study gathered participants' insights on their experiences of dual identities, challenges in connecting to Filipino culture, and the impact of not speaking their cultural language on Filipino/a/x identity.

Significance of the Study

This study holds importance as it marks the first research study utilizing music therapy to explore cultural identity for biracial Filipino/a/x individuals in the United States, and the biracial Filipino/a/x diaspora across the world. This study offers insights into impacts of community

music therapy in the biracial Filipino community. Through this exploration, this research establishes a basis for future inquiries that explore the duality and fluidity of biracial Filipino/a/x identity, and potential applications associated with music therapy.

Literature Review

This literature review explores Filipino Psychology, identity development models for Filipino and biracial individuals, and the application of community music therapy. Given the limited research specifically addressing music therapy and biracial Filipino/a/x identity exploration, it synthesizes findings from related fields. The review emphasizes culturally grounded frameworks and interventions to better understand identity dynamics. By integrating these perspectives, it highlights the potential of community music therapy in fostering cultural connection and identity exploration.

Sikolohiyang Pilipino

Sikolohiyang Pilipino [See-koh-loh-hee-ya-ng Pee-lee-pee-no] (Filipino Psychology) is a field of psychology that was developed by Virgilio G. Enriquez in the Philippines in the late 1970's (Navarro, 2013; Yacat, 2013). Filipino psychologists established the framework to be more culturally reflective of Filipino culture. Filipino psychology looks through a cultural lens to understand the reasons behind or beneath behaviors and mental processes (Nadal, 2020; Pe-Pua et al, 2000; Yacat, 2013). In contrast, Western psychology is individualistic in nature, focusing on individual behavior and traits without regard to cultural context. There are additional differences that can have significant impacts on Filipino community members (Dela Cruz, 2005; Nadal, 2021; Pe-Pua et al, 2000; Santos, 2012 Yacat, 2013). For example, Filipino psychology emphasizes the interconnectedness of family and community in understanding mental health, which is often overlooked in Western models. See Table 1.

Table 1**Comparison of Filipino psychology and Western psychology**

Psychology Type	Cultural Context	Conceptual Frameworks	Research Methodologies	Therapeutic Approaches	Focus on Community
Filipino Psychology	-Behavior and mental processes understood through a cultural lens, local values, beliefs, and practices	-Indigenous concepts used to explain social interactions and psychological phenomena - <i>Ex. Concepts: Kapwa (shared identity), Bayanihan (community), Utang na Loob (debt of gratitude).</i>	-Culturally relevant research methods: prioritize qualitative approaches -Community participation -Indigenous knowledge	-Culturally informed interventions -Focus on Filipino worldview. -Often involves family and community	-Strong emphasis on community and relational dynamics, reflects collectivist nature of Filipino culture.
Western Psychology	-Individual -Universal application -Focus on individual traits and behaviors. - Culture not a focus	-Theories in Western contexts: behaviorism, cognitive psychology, psychoanalysis - May disregard Filipino experience	-Emphasis on quantitative research, standardized assessments -Does not capture nuances of Filipino cultural practices	-Individual therapy -Standard interventions -May disregard family and community context of client	-Individual achievement and autonomy -More individualizing therapeutic goals and approaches

Filipino psychology focuses on the community, relational dynamics, and indigenous frameworks, while Western psychology tends to prioritize individual traits and quantitative approaches. Western psychology relies on behaviorism, cognitive psychology, and psychoanalytic theories that do not directly apply to the Filipino experience. A behavior or mental process that might be culturally acceptable in the Filipino community may be considered atypical by Western psychology standards. It is important that anyone collaborating with the Filipino community utilize Filipino psychology not only to be ethically and culturally responsive, but to also ensure against misdiagnosis and ill-informed treatment.

Models of Ethnic Identity Development

The following section reviews various models of ethnic identity development that can be applied to the exploration of biracial Filipino/a/x identity. These models provide frameworks for understanding how individuals navigate dual or multiethnic backgrounds, considering cultural heritage, societal perceptions, and individual experiences. While not exhaustive, these models offer valuable insights into the dynamic processes of identity formation, particularly in the context of biracial individuals who may grapple with feelings of belonging, cultural integration, and external categorization. The nuanced and multifaceted nature of biracial Filipino/a/x identity highlights the need for models that address intersectionality, historical context, and sociopolitical influences. By examining these models, this section aims to highlight the diverse pathways and challenges that contribute to the development of a cohesive and authentic sense of self for biracial Filipino/a/x individuals.

Nadal's Filipino American Identity Development Model

Nadal's Filipino American Identity Development Model emphasizes Filipino American identity as a distinct racial identity, separate from biracial identity. However, this singular

understanding overlooks the duality and fluidity inherent in the experience of biracial Filipino Americans. Kapwa [kap-wa] specificity to Filipino culture differs from the general collectivism global framework by expanding beyond the immediate family structure and group cohesion and includes a spiritual and moral connection. (Nadal, 2004; Nadal, 2021; Reyes, 2015). Kapwa is inclusive of the entire Filipino community; a shared self that emphasizes a spiritual and moral connection; an intrinsic unity across the community (Nada, 2021; Reyes, 2015). Nadal determined that due to cultural nuances of Filipino American culture, a separate ethnic development model that was more culturally specific than other Asian American models was needed. Additionally, this challenges the US societal practice of lumping all Asian Americans into one category.

Nadal's Filipino American Identity Development Model is divided into six stages (Nadal, 2004; Nadal, 2021):

Stage 1: Ethnic Awareness-Child: Children have a strong sense of self, family, and self-esteem, viewing Filipino Americans as extended family due to their community presence.

While their understanding of race and ethnicity is still emerging, they clearly identify with their Filipino heritage.

Stage 2: Assimilation to Dominant Culture: Individuals may begin to otherize themselves upon realizing their physical and cultural differences from the dominant culture, leading them to attempt assimilation by altering their appearance and adopting dominant norms. As a result, the dominant perspective on other Asian and minority groups often becomes their own.

Stage 3: Social Political Awakening: Due to events like social justice movements or educational experiences, individuals begin to reject the dominant culture's perspective,

becoming more engaged in community issues and solidarity with other Asian American and minority groups. This shift fosters a stronger Asian American identity, prompting a critical view of the dominant culture's role in the oppression of marginalized groups and a desire to address past injustices.

Stage 4: Panethnic Asian American Consciousness: One recognizes their identity as Filipino while also being part of the broader Asian American fabric. While prioritizing the needs of the Filipino community, there is also a sense of responsibility to support the broader Asian American and other minority communities.

Stage 5: Ethnocentric Realization: The focus shifts toward advocating for Filipino American identity over a broader Asian American label, emphasizing the unique needs of the Filipino community. This includes exploring cultural ties and social justice struggles with non-Asian minorities and marginalized groups within the Asian diaspora, like Native Hawaiians, while recognizing the need to educate the dominant group.

Stage 6: Incorporation: One is self-realized in their Filipino identity, encouraging others to explore their own Filipino identity in a supportive manner. There is a revised sense of social justice for all, especially those who have been oppressed. Allies within the dominant group are identified.

Critiques of the model include generalization of the experiences of Filipino Americans by not recognizing place of birth (Philippines, US, or other), impacts of coming to the US as a child versus as an adult, how being born in the Philippines versus the US impacts identity within self and the community, immigration to the US, whether their parents were immigrants or US citizens, and the impact of having connection with the Philippine homeland. Specifically in terms of biracial Filipino/a/x, the model only addresses one side of the duality of experience of biracial

Filipino/a/x. This model implies development of Filipino/a/x identity with parents of ethnic Filipino background, which fails to address nuances of biracial Filipino/a/x such as those who are phenotypically white and how colorism within the Filipino and Filipino American communities impacts identity development.

Porton's Biracial Identity Development Model

Porton was the first to explore and develop an identity development model that focused on biracial identity (Ford et al., 2016; Hud-Aleem et al., 2008). Fluidity of biracial identity is not often addressed in traditional racial or ethnic identity models that focus on a singular racial identity. Identity does not necessarily form as “part of one culture,” as there are two cultures that may be in play for biracial people (Ferguson, 2016). Fluidity in biracial identity refers to the ability of individuals with parents from different ethnic or racial backgrounds to navigate and adapt to multiple cultural contexts. This means they can switch between diverse cultural norms and practices depending on the environment they are in, allowing them to engage with both cultures uniquely and authentically (Parker et al., 2015; Morin, 2015). In the US, the majority white culture impacts how a biracial Filipino person may or may not engage with and own their Filipino identity. Additionally, a biracial Filipino/a/x person's self-identification of being part of the Filipino community may be impacted by their own connection and engagement in the Filipino community.

Porton's Biracial Identity Development Model involves five stages (Ford et al., 2016; Hud-Aleem et al., 2008):

Stage 1: Personal identity: Focused on childhood, the individual has not yet developed awareness of their biracial background. Identity does not include biracial background.

Stage 2: Choice of group categorization: The individual is pressured to choose one of the racial/ethnic identities by family, friends, peers, and other influencers.

Stage 3: Enmeshment/denial: Confusion related to the duality of identity leads to guilt. By accepting one side of self, the other is denied. May have negative views of the denied part of self.

Stage 4: Appreciation: Acceptance of identity leads to exploration of both. There may be a primary identity, but both are acknowledged.

Stage 5: Integration: Both parts of identity exist and are lived. One may still dominate over the other, but both are incorporated (i.e., rituals, food, language).

This model recognizes the duality of both identities by acknowledging the early pressure of a primary identity and the development of incorporation of both identities. Particularly in the Appreciation stage, the use of fluidity begins to develop and becomes more intentional in the Integration stage. The application of this model is not specific to biracial Filipino/a/x individuals, making it a model that can be applied to any biracial identity. The one critique of this model is that it does not address other factors that may play into choosing a primary identity, such as perhaps that the individual does not have immediate access or regular exposure to one of their two cultural groups. Additionally, the model does not address the choice to be biracial in a balanced way, alluding to one being the primary of the two identities.

Continuum of Biracial Identity Model

Rockquemore and Laszloffy's Continuum of Biracial Identity Model addresses the issue of Porton's Biracial Identity Development Model with the incorporation of an "equal blended identity of the two" identities (Hud-Aleem et al., 2008). This model suggests that an individual blends their identities along a continuum which is fluid based on ever changing factors. Fluidity

is key here. One may embody and fully engage in their Filipino/a/x identity depending on where they are and who is in the environment, the same goes for their other identity. For example, a biracial Filipino/a/x individual may use community language, such as “Ate” [ah-tey] (a word used as a sign of respect to address an older sister or female-identifying person) when addressing another Filipino/a/x, but would not use the term when speaking with someone who is not Filipino.

Community Music Therapy for Biracial Identity Exploration

Community Music Therapy (CoMT) is an area of practice where community is a “context to work *in* but also to work *with*” (Stige, 2004). Different from other music therapy areas of practice, CoMT can support biracial Filipino/a/x individuals in navigating dual identities by providing a structured framework for identity exploration, cultural expression, and communal healing.

CoMT is a "movement and orientation" that challenges the limitations of conventional therapy methods, which typically follow rigid frameworks of music therapy, psychotherapy, and the medical model. It highlights a collective cultural community experience that incorporates sociocultural, ecological, and social justice perspectives, offering a more holistic and culturally informed approach. The core tenets of CoMT encompass the following principles called

PREPARE (Ansdell and Stige, 2016; Stige, 2015):

(P)articipation: Engages active music-making within the community, emphasizing collective experiences over individual ones.

(R)esource-Oriented: Focuses on strengths, leveraging community resources to promote wellness and strength-building.

(E)cological: Considers the context within which the community culture exists,

looking at social, environmental, and other social justice influences.

(P)erformative: Leverages the "performance" aspect by fostering expression and creativity through collaborative music-making roles, which can promote community healing, growth, and exploration of identity.

(A)ctivist: Music is used as a tool to empower the community through advocacy, awareness, and challenging systemic issues that impact the community.

(R)eflective: Ongoing reflection about how music therapy impacts participants and the community.

(E)thics-driven: Is human centered and human rights focused, and is not directed by the Western medical model. This allows for a more holistic approach that incorporates culturally specific treatment and ideologies, such as Filipino Psychology.

Music is a vital part of Filipino culture. It is expected that singing, instrument playing, music listening, and dancing will occur at a Filipino event or private gathering. No music would be considered odd. The cultural importance of music is one reason music therapy lends well to exploring identity topics in the Filipino community. CoMT's focus on the community, culture, and social justice, rather than the individual, is not only aligned with some of the biracial identity development models already defined in this paper, but also with the Filipino cultural value of Kapwa [kap-wa]: a shared identity, interconnectedness, and sense of belonging (Nadal, 2021).

As an integral part of Filipino culture, music provides a familiar connection that may lessen the cultural taboo of therapy. The collaborative nature of CoMT sessions invites community-building within a group. Through collaboration, the music encourages Kapwa among biracial Filipino/a/x individuals. This aspect is particularly beneficial as creating music together helps to establish connection through shared and similar lived experiences. Culturally, Kapwa is

a guiding principle in many aspects of Filipino life, influencing social interactions, family dynamics, and community engagements. Incorporating Filipino music, words, and instruments into sessions can introduce and resolidify cultural pride and identity. Furthermore, the Filipino culture is communal in nature, often employing collective experiences which aligns with CoMT's focus on social, cultural and community aspects.

Methodology

Restatement of Purpose

This research study aims to explore how music therapy can foster cultural connection for biracial Filipino/a/x individuals living in the United States by teaching basic Tagalog through music-making. The study gathered participants' insights on their experiences of dual identities, challenges in connecting to Filipino culture, and the impact of not speaking their cultural language on Filipino/a/x identity.

Research Questions

1. In what ways, if any, does culturally focused music-making build a sense of community among biracial Filipino/a/x American adults?
2. Does the inability to speak Tagalog or other Filipino/a/x dialects contribute to biracial Filipino/a/x adults' experience of exclusion, both within and outside the Filipino/a/x community? What other factors contribute to their sense of exclusion?
3. In what ways, if any, does culturally focused music making promote identity exploration for biracial Filipino/a/x American adults?

Research Design

Research involving music therapy and the Filipino/a/x community, and the biracial Filipino/a/x identity in general is extremely limited. This research study explored identity and

community building through active music engagement with biracial Filipino/a/x followed by a focus group discussion. Participants in this specific group self-identified as biracial Filipino/a/x. By exploring participants' lived experiences of identity and meaning as Filipino/a/x, as well as the experience of culturally centered music making to build community, the aim of this study was to determine the efficacy of CoMT to connect biracial Filipino/a/x to their Filipino identity and community. Participants engaged in a focus group discussion at the conclusion of their community music therapy sessions.

Recruitment and Eligibility

Criterion-based sampling was utilized, which required specific and predefined criteria related to the research (Moser et al, 2018). Snowball sampling was also attempted, but did not garner eligible participants. The recruitment period started in January 2024 and continued through the last music therapy group session as word got out about the study in the community. Recruitment initially started with passive recruitment methods including posting flyers and making announcements on social media and professional networking platforms with a QR code. After only a few months, more active recruitment methods were engaged including sending personalized email requests to Filipino/a/x and Asian focused mental health social media platforms and organizations and attending in-person events. Direct shares from colleagues, Filipino/a/x community members, and attending an in-person Filipino community event garnered the final participants of the study.

To ensure an ethical selection and research process, several measures were implemented. The study underwent a thorough review by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Slippery Rock University, which evaluated the potential risks and benefits of the project. Participants received a comprehensive informed consent form detailing the study's objectives, as well as any

possible risks and benefits. They were informed that participation was completely voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time. Moreover, anonymity was guaranteed to the extent possible when participating in a group experience, and participants' names were replaced with pseudonyms in the transcripts.

Interested participants filled out an online interest survey, which asked questions related to the minimum demographic criteria (see Appendixes for questions). Interested participants also contacted the investigator regarding specific questions regarding eligibility to participate. Of the six interested participants, three were deemed ineligible during the screening process: two did not meet the minimum age requirement, and one did not meet the operational definition of biracial for the purposes of this study.

Participants

Participants included three biracial Filipino/a/x individuals from the Portland, Oregon metropolitan area who attended music therapy sessions from late July to August. Initial recruitment was aimed for six participants; however, the final smaller group provided focused and meaningful data. While the initial target was six participants, the final group consisted of three biracial Filipino/a/x individuals, whose in-depth participation provided rich qualitative data for the study.

Eligible participants for this study were required to meet specific demographic criteria. They had to be at least 18 years of age. This minimum age of 18 was chosen for ease of consent requirements, to minimize outside participants (i.e., parents and guardians), and to manage topics that may be deemed not culturally appropriate to discuss with minors. Prospective participants were required to fulfill the following identity and location criteria: the individual must identify as

a biracial individual of Filipinx heritage, and reside within the geographic confines of the Portland, Oregon metropolitan area, which includes Vancouver, Washington, and nearby suburbs.

In the context of this research, the term "biracial" within the Filipino/a/x framework was operationally defined as individuals who had one parent of ethnically full Filipino/a/x descent and one parent whose ethnic background differs from the Filipino/a/x heritage. As part of the aim of the research was to increase participants' Tagalog speaking skills, it was preferred that participants were English speakers who possessed limited to no proficiency in spoken Tagalog or other dialects indigenous to the Filipino/a/x cultural milieu.

Data Collection Methods

Qualified participants were sent an online pre-survey through Qualtrics, which asked questions to gauge current involvement with their Filipino community, biracial identity, exposure to music therapy, and knowledge of music therapy as an allied health care field in Oregon. Each in-person group music therapy session was audio recorded on an audio recording device. The recording device was placed in the room on a chair as part of the group circle during each session. Following the six sessions, a focus group discussion was also audio recorded.

Procedure

The investigator met with participants in a group music therapy setting for six weekly sessions lasting approximately 60 minutes each in length. The sessions often exceeded the 60-minute time to support participant discussion. Though the intent was to meet in six sequential meetings, flexibility was needed to account for schedules and the use of availability of the Filipino Bayanihan Center where the sessions were conducted.

At each session, the investigator started with a check-in, followed by a receptive or active music making experience exploring identity and community. The investigator provided a cultural

sheet at five of the sessions that introduced a Filipino cultural value through definitions, specific questions about the value, pronunciation of Tagalog words related to the value with English translation, and Filipino facts.

The investigator incorporated research questions and topics into each session to gather information regarding each participant's lived experience and connection to Filipino/a/x identity and community. Music experiences varied depending on participant responses, but primarily involved improvisation and songwriting. Discussions also naturally occurred as part of the CoMT sessions. The investigator provided Filipino snacks and drinks, as well a Filipino cultural item for most sessions. As a biracial Filipina and a member of the Filipino/a/x community, the investigator has personal experience recognizing that food plays a crucial role in fostering connection within the community.

In closing each session, the investigator held space for any additional comments or questions. If the next scheduled time and day had not yet been confirmed, the investigator contacted each participant by text and email with the information. Immediately following the final session, participants were invited to participate in a focus group discussion to reflect on their experience in the group. The investigator also provided catered Filipino food during the focus group discussion, creating a familiar and culturally meaningful environment for participants to share their thoughts.

Planned Session Topics and Experientials

The intention was for all sessions to be group sessions, but due to issues outside of the investigator's control, several of the sessions ended up being individual sessions. The first four sessions covered pre-colonial cultural values as follows (See Appendices 1-5):

Session #1: Introduction to Music Therapy and Filipino Cultural Value, Kapwa [kap-wa] (Fellow Being)

In this session, participants were introduced to music therapy. The theme included an introduction to one of the four pre-colonial Filipino cultural values, Kapwa. Kapwa encapsulates the interconnectedness and shared bonds within the community that speaks to interpersonal, spiritual, and emotional planes (Nadal, 2021). The session incorporated an initial check-in, active music making on a variety of instruments, discussion about Kapwa in each participant's experience, and learning basic Tagalog introductions, pronunciations and words associated with Kapwa. Participants were provided with a 1-page sheet with basic Tagalog introductions and pronunciations that also included Kapwa themed questions and a list of biracial Filipino/a/x actors and musical artists.

Session #2: Filipino Cultural Value, Utang ng Loob [Oo-tang ng La-oh-oh-b](Debt of Gratitude)

In this session, participants were introduced to the second of the four pre-colonial cultural values, Utang ng loob. This cultural value recognizes a benefactor's kindness and commitment to reciprocate the favor or kindness (Nadal, 2021). Utang ng loob underscores the importance of harmony and reciprocity within relationships and social networks (Nadal, 2021). The session incorporated an initial check-in, active music making on a variety of instruments, discussion about Utang ng loob in each participant's experience, and learning basic Tagalog words associated with Utang ng loob. Participants were provided with a 1-page sheet with basic Tagalog introductions and pronunciations, as well as Utang ng loob specific question prompts. The back of the sheet contained a list of local Filipino/a/x businesses in Oregon and SW Washington.

Session #3: Filipino Cultural Value, Hiya [Hee-yuh] (Shame)

In this session, participants were introduced to the third of the four pre-colonial cultural values, Hiya. This social value shapes behavior, as it not only impacts an individual's reputation within society, but also that of the family (Nadal, 2021). This value is connected to Utang ng loob, as Hiya helps to maintain social harmony (Nadal, 2021). The session incorporated an initial check-in, active music making on a variety of instruments, discussion about Hiya in each participant's experience, and learning basic Tagalog words associated with Hiya. Participants were provided with a 1-page sheet with basic Tagalog introductions and pronunciations. Prompts were provided that centered on how Hiya has shown up in each participant's Filipino culture, relationships, and the other side of their identity.

Session #4: Filipino Cultural Value, Pakikisama [Pa-kee-kee-sah-ma] (Social Acceptance)

Participants were introduced to the last of the four pre-colonial cultural values, Pakikisama. This cultural value encompasses the idea of harmony, particularly social cohesion, cooperation, and ability to work as part of a community (Nadal, 2021). The session incorporated an initial check-in, active music making on a variety of instruments, discussion about Pakikisama in each participant's experience, and learning basic Tagalog words associated with Pakikisama. Participants were provided with a 1-page sheet with basic Tagalog introductions and pronunciations. Through a mixture of Pakikisama focused prompts and improvisation, the group explored identification of Pakikisama in their lives.

Session #5: Songwriting

The original plan was to have participants work together to write a song based on one of the four values that would incorporate Tagalog words learned during the previous sessions. The song would utilize a combination of English and Tagalog words. If needed, songwriting would

continue into session #6. The original session incorporated an initial check-in, songwriting, active music making, and group discussion. However, due to the request of the solo participant that attended, the session plan changed to support a discussion regarding intersectionality of identity that could not be recorded to protect the participant's identity the community, as well as addressing a separate issue at home that the participant wanted to discuss. As a result, songwriting was not utilized in this session as planned. However, a chant was created as part of active music making that incorporated Tagalog and improvisation non drums.

Session #6: Filipinx identity and community

In the final session, participants engaged in active music making experiences incorporating the cultural values, concepts, and Tagalog words learned throughout the experience. The session incorporated an initial check-in and included active music making with instruments, songwriting, discussion, or other interventions selected by the group.

Post Music Therapy Session Focus Group

This meeting was scheduled immediately after the final group music therapy session. The focus group discussion included semi-structured questions focusing on the overall experience for each participant. No music making was involved during this discussion.

Data Analysis

Sessions one through four, session six, and the focus group discussion were recorded and subsequently transcribed manually by the investigator. Thematic coding was used to identify key themes that emerged from each session and identified across the recordings. Key themes were then consolidated and analyzed for consistency and relevance across all sessions. This process helped to highlight the most significant insights from the data and facilitated the identification of overarching themes in the discussions.

Ethical considerations

Confidentiality and Privacy

The Filipino/a/x community is small in the Portland metro area. It was highly likely that the investigator would attend a community event outside the research study and encounter participants outside of the research context. Participants were informed that if this were to occur the relationship would not be disclosed. Participants were asked not to share information that was discussed during sessions with others outside of the group to help in maintaining confidentiality with group members.

Cultural Relevance and Methodology

As this research study was facilitated by an investigator with the same biracial identity as the participants and utilizing a CoMT approach, ethical considerations were made regarding the use of Filipino psychology approaches that are in contrast with Western psychology approaches. This study primarily utilized Filipino psychology approaches, such as *kapwa* [kap-wa](shared identity) and *bayanihan* [bye-yaw-knee-hahn] (communal unity), which emphasize relational dynamics, community, and collective well-being. Additionally, *loob* [la-oh-oh-b](inner self) was considered in understanding participants' emotional and psychological experiences during the sessions. Some elements of Western psychology research methods were incorporated, such as the use of a pre-CoMT survey to collect quantitative data and music prompts for improvisation during sessions.

Trauma-Informed Approach

In working with identity exploration, one must consider any potential traumas that may arise due to participants sharing experiences of being “otherized,” discriminated against, embodying both the colonizer and colonized related to a dual identity, or other topics. Therefore,

it was important that the investigator had a basic understanding of Filipino history, particularly related to the colonization by Spain and the United States, and its impact on identity development. The investigator completed training in trauma-informed therapy, social justice, and multicultural counseling during graduate studies and continuing education.

Physical Space and Confidentiality

The space in which the in-person group music therapy sessions were held was chosen with care. It was decided that a Filipino community related space was important to invite further exploration and introduction to the community. The community room space was scheduled and booked with the center prior to each session. Since the study was being conducted in a Filipino/a/x community space, signs were placed to signal that research was underway, minimizing interruptions and safeguarding participant confidentiality. Separate signs were posted in Tagalog and English on the group room door stating that a research study was in progress.

Findings and Discussion

Participant Demographics

The pre-CoMT survey asked community participants 13 questions pertaining to their identity, Filipino/a/x identity, Filipino community involvement, and knowledge of music therapy (see Table 2, Appendix 1). Participants ranged in age range from 18 to 44 years old. Participants had varying levels of Tagalog or other Filipinx dialect language skills; all participants spoke fluent US English. Two of the participants had a mother of Filipino/a/x heritage; one participant with a father of Filipino/a/x heritage.

Participation and plans to participate in Filipino community events varied, as well as the barriers that prevented community involvement. However, the barriers were different for each participant. The decision to use terms such as ‘biologically female’ and ‘biologically male’ was

made to ensure clarity. This choice aimed to avoid confusion for participants who might not be familiar with the terms ‘assigned at birth,’ reflecting generational differences in language. See specific pre-survey questions in Table 2, appendix.

The AAPI dashboard(AAPIdata, 2024) reports there were “1,360,884 Filipino Americans who identify with more than one race.” For the purposes of this study, the focus was placed on the Filipino aspect of identity in relation to being biracial. The presurvey did not ask about non-Filipino ethnic identity, but some participants mentioned it when relevant to the conversation.

Although not included in the survey, it is important to note that the initial reason for each participant's family's immigration was mentioned during the sessions. Two of the participants had a military family connection through a parent, while one participant had grandparents that immigrated from the Philippines with no military connection. The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services agency reports that from 2020 to 2024, there were 5,630 military naturalizations for people born in the Philippines (Military Naturalization Statistics, 2024). It should be noted that all participants were born in the United States.

Additionally, all three participants identified as musicians. All three participated in formal lessons, while two received college level training. One identified as a professional musician while also having another day job. Another identified as a therapeutic artist with college level studies in music therapy, while the third identified as a current music therapy student. The three community participants reported that the research study was the first time being in a space solely for biracial Filipinos.

Themes

There were no preconceived notions of what topics may arise when formulating this research study. The investigator asked questions specific to the cultural values that were presented that

week, and only asked additional questions related to the topics that were presented. Table 3 shows that themes of *Food*, *Am I Filipino Enough?*, *Appropriation*, *Music*, and *Tagalog*, were the most popular and reoccurring during the research study and will be discussed below.

Table 3

Topics and themes

Topics	Food	Am I Filipino Enough?	Appropriation	Music	Use of Tagalog	Western Culture
Session #1-Kapwa	X	X	X	X	X	X
Session # 2- Utang Ng Loob	X	X	X	X	X	X
Session # 3- Continuation of Utang Ng Loon	X			X	X	X
Session #4- Pakikisama	X					X
Session #5- Songwriting						
Session #6- Recap and Songwriting	X	X	X	X	X	

Other notable themes included family generational history, connection to the homeland, and immigration history. Colorism was another theme that was discussed, and was related to the “Am I Filipino Enough?” theme. The themes in Session #5 were deliberately not included as the session was not audio recorded due to the sensitive nature of themes discussed, the specific intersectional identity-related themes that may identify the participant, and at the mutual agreement of both the participant and the investigator.

Food

Food was the most common theme that came up in every session, particularly as it relates to Kapwa. In the Filipino/a/x culture, food is an important characteristic of the community. If you have been to a Filipino event, you may have noticed there is never a lack of a variety of food. Food not only nourishes the body but also embodies the idea of Kapwa through taking care of others, connection, and cultural rituals. It is a way of inviting others into the community, even if you may not be a member. Aurora spoke of the pride she felt when hosting her first gathering at her house. She made the traditional foods that her mother taught her through oral tradition as well as a few she learned on her own. The group spoke about connecting through comparing recipes and feeling at home when their favorite Filipino/a/x dish was provided.

Kim specifically spoke about a time when she had prepared food for her high school graduation. The pride she felt seeing the large table of food she had spent hours preparing to share with her friends, classmates, and family. Kim became tearful when sharing about how her non-Filipino friends and classmates hardly touched any of the food she had prepared. She shared feeling like she had done something wrong, a feeling of Hiya (shame) coming over her. It was

not until her Filipino Titas¹ and Titos² arrived and started eating the food that she felt better.

Upon asking her non-Filipino friends as to why they hardly ate anything, many reported to Kim that they had never seen so much food at a party and did not know what to do.

Lynn shared this sentiment about Filipino food culture:

My aunties were such a beautiful ritual. That was just a part of our family. I didn't think about it until I was outside of it. My aunties would make all the food, and sit and say, "you eat, you eat". And then I would say to auntie, "what about you, what about you?" She would say, "no, you first, you." It was always intergenerational. So then like white culture was always separate. So like kids....when I was hanging out with my white family, oh there's even a kids table. But like Filipino family. We're all running around. My dad is the youngest of 16. But yeah, like so when I'm out doing service in the community, um, the people come first.

The group shared related stories of numerous occasions of being invited to non-Filipino parties with the expectation that a meal was being provided. To their surprise, these parties had appetizers of crackers and cheese or processed types of finger foods. This was in stark contrast to tables full of homemade lumpia, pancit, adobo, sinigang and other Filipino dishes that are often found at Filipino gatherings. Culturally, if you go to a Filipino event, you must have a second plate or risk offending the host, their family, and anyone that brought food to the party. Do not be surprised by being asked to take a variety of food home with you. A related concept is that Filipino gatherings are not fully catered by the host. It is a cultural expectation that if you go to a

¹ Tita (pronounced tee-tah) is a Tagalog word translating to "auntie". The person doesn't necessarily need to be a familial relation. The word is used in a respectful way towards an older identifying female. Ate (pronounced ah-the) is another word that is often used that refers to an older sister or female friend (Rafael, 2000).

² Tito (pronounced tee-toh) is a Tagalog word translating to "uncle". The person doesn't necessarily need to be a familial relation. The work is used in a respectful way towards an older identifying male. Kuya (pronounced koo-yuh) is another word that is often used that refers to an older brother of male friend (Rafael, 2000).

Filipino gathering, you bring something to share. Several of the participants shared the sentiment that if you do not bring something you will not be turned away as there is always plenty of food, but you will be asked what you brought.

Am I Filipino Enough?

Many of the participants mentioned the concern: “Am I Filipino Enough?” Who gets to decide? Is it internalized westernization? Is it the colonizer part of our identities placing doubt on the colonized part of our identity? Aurora shared ways in which she was otherized in various parts of the US. Growing up in the South, she was often grouped together with other Asians and made fun of for being Asian. She also shared that she was made fun of for being white when her family moved to Hawaii for a military station that her father was assigned. Aurora shared, “That made me feel like, where do I belong?”

During the first session and after a group music improvisation, Aurora shared this about her playing during the music experiential where she played a drum:

When I was playing, I was thinking like, kind of expressing some sort of offbeat, I guess. That's sort of how it feels growing up. Kind of offbeat from everyone else. You're not this or you're not this. I know now that the truth of it is that I am both. You know. And it took somebody telling me, "You are not half anything. You are both of those things. You embody both of them. Even not just like genetically. It doesn't play a role into our culture at all. It was what I was thinking when I was playing though. How frustrated....how it felt to not know that until more recently. Like to what degree was it me holding myself back. [muffled] Feeling like I'm not Filipino enough. I think that's a question that many biracial Filipinos will say, or multiracial Filipinos will say, 'am I Filipino enough?' And

it's always just going to be "yeah." It would be so hard to tell myself that. So, that's some of the frustration I felt.

Lynn shared a similar sentiment:

.... I'd say when you do DEI work, and you go to your affinity group. They say....I remember when they first started doing that working in non-profit. You can go to the BIPOC group or to the white group. So, what happens when you are both or you're multi? In America, we don't hold anything where we can have both. When you think about choices it's very limited. You can have this candidate or this candidate, but you can't have both. You can have one music program and that's it, you can't have multi. Like, that's what is so interesting, no matter what it is. People really struggle with. It's not set up for people to accept both. And even when they are trying to teach things like equity and inclusion, it was so fascinating to me because you need to pick a side.

Lynn's sentiments also play into the narrative of "Am I Filipino enough?" Lynn's answers her own question regarding who she needs permission from by asking, "by who?" Lynn also connected with sentiments shared by Aurora, "They said you are not Filipino enough or you're not white enough, so you always try to relate to the spaces." Who determines how Filipino someone is? What makes you Filipino enough?

A topic that is not often discussed, except for among biracial folx is the *otherization* by both of their ethnic or racial communities that can occur. This often leaves biracial Filipino/a/x folx feeling in limbo, or as Lynn mentioned, the "pressure to pick a side." Additionally, biracial Filipino/a/x folx may also experience erasure of their Filipino identity when in primarily white spaces due to the way they visually present, such as being white passing. Biracial Filipinos may feel the need to either hide their identity or overstate their Filipino identity to be seen depending

on the safety of these spaces. Therapists that are collaborating with biracial Filipino/a/x clients must validate this unique duality, otherization, and the feelings of not belonging that will arise.

Cultural Appropriation

The concept of appropriation was approached from the perspective of a colonizer identity (David, 2013; Nadal, 2004). This viewpoint examines how cultural elements are taken or adapted by a dominant, colonizing group, often disregarding the significance or context of the original culture. Many biracial Filipinos, particularly those of Filipino and white descent, embody both the colonized and colonizer identities. The duality may present a unique challenge for biracial Filipinos to reconcile their Filipino identity with their connection to the dominant, often white, culture, influencing their understanding of cultural appropriation.

Aurora's experience as a biracial Filipina navigating both her Filipino heritage and her connection to the Black community highlights the complex dynamics of cultural appropriation, especially when it involves both the colonized and the colonizer. Growing up in Georgia, a region with a more racially and culturally diverse music scene than Oregon, Aurora immersed herself in the Blues community, a space deeply rooted in Black cultural history. She learned directly from Black musicians, and this exposure shaped her understanding and connection to Blues music. However, her light skin and biracial Filipina heritage led to internal conflict about her place in this space. On one hand, Aurora felt that her active participation in the community and the mentorship she received from Black musicians provided a sense of belonging and an implicit permission to engage with Blues music. On the other hand, she recognized her light-skinned privilege as a biracial Filipina and became increasingly aware of the potential for cultural appropriation, particularly when performing or participating in Blues outside of its original cultural context.

Her struggle is further complicated by her identity as an ally to the Black and member of the Filipino communities, where issues of social justice and historical oppression intersect. She sees parallels between the struggles of the Black and Filipino communities, especially in terms of colonization, marginalization, and resilience. This understanding has heightened her awareness of the delicate balance between cultural exchange and appropriation. Since moving to Portland, Aurora has noticed the more racially and culturally segregated music scenes, which has prompted her to reflect more deeply on her role in Blues music. She now finds herself grappling with how to honor both the tradition of Blues and her own Filipino identity without crossing into appropriation, while continuing to be a supportive ally to the Black community. This ongoing reflection illustrates the broader challenges faced by biracial individuals in navigating cultural spaces and identities that are intertwined with both colonized and colonizer histories.

Lynn discussed a project she was working on where she is composing music with traditional Filipino instruments and expressed her desire to learn the kulintang, a Filipino instrument made up of horizontally arranged gongs (Trimillos, 2021). During a trip to the Philippines, she met with a family in Mindanao who crafted these instruments. Although the family was from a different province than Lynn's own, which initially made her apprehensive about the potential for appropriation, they encouraged her to pursue learning the instrument. Lynn shared that she feels a sense of pride when playing the kulintang but also experiences fear about performing it in the United States. When she was asked why she was afraid:

But I'm so proud to play it [kulintang]. It's in my living room. And I am going to do it, but I think it's hard to ...there's like some of the images [referring to second drumming prompt]. I saw community dancing while I was playing...it's [kulintang] a celebration instrument...to bring people together. I so deeply want to do it, but I'm afraid. For all

these weird reasons.....I think it's because like people....I think....it's interesting how DEI work is supposed to support, but it's creating more barriers for me spiritually. I feel like I'm constantly working on the decolonization of my spirit. Cause of like the whole appropriating thing. I feel like I'm appropriating, even though I feel like so called. So that's why I'm really trying to listen to my spirit versus what providence or have you getting permission. I'm like, "by who?" The family that built the instrument encouraged me, but it's like the academic world that I really struggle with. I went to....California has more Filipinos that teach about these instruments. They even teach about this instrument in college. But even that's super academic. But I think it's like part of my colonized spirit saying....that's those voices are just so deep in me. Oh, you better be careful. But I think that's so Filipino too. You know, don't look at a tree like that.

Aurora responded, encouraging support of Lynn playing the kulintang:

I feel like, especially when it comes to instruments and stuff. I think it's the idea...well maybe, maybe... of belong and belongings. I'll say this to you [Lynn] that belongs to you...your will, your intention, your spirit, to play and the instrument belongs to you. We have this Western idea of belongings, it's so much more of a thing, the thing itself and not like what you have inside that's telling you like "this belongs to me" to express it. That expressing it belongs to me. That's something I grapple with in music. Some people are into gear itself...I don't care.

Lynn continues:

I encourage everything possible; I just don't give my permission to do it. I so resonate to what you're saying because my spirit is called to sing and play all kinds of music. But I feel....I want to be respectful at the same time. It's a struggle. I think about it in different

ways. Maybe the how or the intention of music making. Yeah, I don't want to make money. I am not going to ask money off of it. The appropriated part is complicated.

Use of Music

Improvisation experientials were used that involved some culturally specific prompts, while others were unprompted. A variety of hand small hand percussion (shakers, bells, sand blocks), tubano drums, frame drums, a guitar, harp, and tongue drum were available for music making. The following are culturally specific prompts that were used related to a cultural value or related topic.

Session #1- Kapwa [kap-wa] (Interconnectedness)

Improvisation Prompt #1: *While we are playing, think about a time when you didn't feel like you were connected to your Filipino culture.*

Improvisation Prompt #2: *Now, let's do it again. But now, we are going to think about a time when we felt really connected to our Filipino identity. It could be a specific ritual, event, or something like that.*

Aurora and Lynn were both surprised by the intensity of emotions that surfaced during the session. For Prompt #1, Aurora shared feelings of frustration as it brought back memories of being bullied for her Asian heritage and, in a different context, for being white. These recollections highlighted the challenges of navigating her biracial identity and the disconnection she felt in both communities. The prompts allowed both participants to reflect on their personal experiences, deepening their understanding of how *Kapwa* shapes their sense of belonging and identity.

After Prompt #2, Lynn talked about connection:

I feel like I have this really deep desire to feel connected. So, the second prompt was more of giving myself permission. Because the prompt gives permission naturally. I feel like I have this really deep desire to feel connected. So, the second prompt was more of giving myself permission. Because the prompt gives permission naturally.

Session #2- Recap of Kapwa and Utang Ng Loob [oo-tang ng la-oh-oh-b] (Debt of Gratitude)

No specific improvisation prompts were used during this session. Instead, the session began with unprompted music-making. Aurora shared that the improvisation helped her feel grounded, leading to a natural transition into a deeper conversation about the role of music therapy. The discussion explored the concept of playing music for its own sake, emphasizing the therapeutic value of creativity and connection through sound. Throughout the session, topics such as colorism within the community, intersectional identities (gender, sexuality, ethnic, cultural, socioeconomic, geographic), and lived examples of *Utang Ng Loob* (debt of gratitude) also emerged. This session highlighted how unstructured music-making can foster emotional grounding, facilitate meaningful dialogue, and bring to the surface complex cultural and personal issues.

Session #3- Continuation of Utang Ng Loob (Debt of Gratitude)

Improvisation Prompt #1: *Think of a time when Utang Ng Loob wasn't received but think about how it would have felt if it had been received.*

Kim described feeling rested and experiencing a sense of “home,” explaining it as the feeling of inviting someone into a personal and meaningful space through acts of giving. She shared that when this gesture is not accepted, it feels like rejection. Kim recounted a specific experience during a trip where her friends provided transportation, and as an expression of

gratitude, she offered to buy them dinner. When her friends declined her offer, she felt hurt emotionally. During discussion, the group connected these feelings to the concept of *Utang Ng Loob* (a Filipino cultural value emphasizing gratitude and reciprocal giving) and the pain of having it unacknowledged or rejected. The group reflected on the challenges of navigating Filipino cultural norms, such as *Utang Ng Loob*, in predominantly non-Filipino settings where such practices may not be shared or understood.

Kim shared a conversation she had with her mom:

Yeah, my Mom visited the Philippines just 1 year ago, I think. It was her first time going back home in over 10 years. And she was telling me that when you go back you have to give, people expect gifts from America. My Mom almost wants to go back, she's poor here. Because even the gifts she gave they were like, "this is it?". They receive, this is what you are giving me..... my Lola is big on giving. She has a super servant heart, but it's never been like she has held over my Uncle's or my Mom's head. It wasn't like you have to give back to. My Lola always gives what she can and doesn't expect anything.

That's my family's departure from that.

Investigator: *It's [Utang Ng Loob] interesting that's a cultural aspect that switched when your family came to the US.*

Kim: *Yeah, I don't know if it's because we came to the US. My Lola is super deep in her faith. So I think it has to do with that. You don't give and expect anything. You give to give. I've been visiting my Lola every Monday this summer, and we were actually talking about that. She always trusts that God will provide for her. I don't know where I'm going with that. She just gives a lot. She has never asked why are you giving that. At the end of the day she has what she needs.*

Session #4 - Pakikisama [pah-kee-kee-sahmah] (Social Acceptance and Harmony) and Hiya (Shame)

In the previous session, Aurora and Kim reflected on how their mothers' experiences of growing up with limited financial means in the Philippines influenced their lives and its connection to capitalism. They were tasked with asking their mothers, “*How has that [growing up with limited means] influenced you in retaining things?*” Aurora shared that this conversation led her to learn new information about her great-grandfather, who was part of the guerrilla armed forces in the Philippines. This discovery resonated with her current involvement in social justice activities within the Filipino community. She expressed gratitude for the conversation, acknowledging that she would not have uncovered this family history without asking her mother about her background.

Aurora:

It was actually pretty incredible. Because I got a chance to talk to her about how she grew up. And why she moved to Manilla. I also learned that my great grandfather was like this like guerrilla commando like sergeant of like some guerrilla force in Lyte. I was like, what the frick, Mom, I never knew this....Mom, that's you. That's your blood.

Investigator:

Does that kind of make sense with what you do here? [Referencing the volunteer and advocacy work Aurora does at the Filipino Bayanihan Center].

Aurora:

Yeah, I told my Mom that too. It was really beautiful. We just really talked about the, the rich culture, the fight in Filipinos. That stands up for each other. That's always the history of Filipinos. I don't know. It was really profound actually. And to touch base with my

Mom what was wholesome. It's mostly wholesome every time, but it's substance that I don't think I ever got from my Mom before. She was very proud I could tell from her voice. I felt that same pride, you know. Like it's very healthy. Knowing where you come from, and we do what we do for the greater of our community. And yeah, that's so important. She was just saying, we gotta keep looking at our history so we know where we come from. That's just really beautiful. What the heck. But yeah, that was just this morning. She just called me, and I was like, Mom.

Investigator:

Kim, did you have a chance to talk to your Mom?

Kim:

I did and I didn't. I don't know. I was just like she was lying around at home because she was tired. But I kind of mentioned it to my grandparents a little bit cause right after [referring to last session] we had lunch. I said, we talked about shame and being Filipino. And they were like, what? And they got like really quiet. I said, okay, never mind, I didn't know how to explain what we talked about. I did learn she moved to America when she was 30 or 31.

Kim also shared that her mother avoids camping because it reminds her of hardships growing up in the Philippines.

Improvisation Prompt #1: *What are some questions you want to ask your parents [related to being Filipino and their experience] that you haven't asked them before that you're curious about?*

Improvisation Prompt #2: *Think about that feeling when you go into a market and are able to find Filipino products.*

The first prompt emerged from Aurora and Kim's conversations with their mothers. Kim expressed a desire to delve deeper into her mother's story, specifically asking why she chose to move to the U.S., what led her to stay, and what made her realize that this was her home. Aurora, on the other hand, expressed curiosity about discussing the possibility of moving to the Philippines together with her mother.

The second prompt arose during a discussion about Asian markets and the mixed emotions of shopping in mainstream stores where culturally specific foods are either scarce or relegated to a small section. After music-making, the group reflected on shared feelings of comfort and a sense of “home” associated with finding Filipino products. They also shared detailed memories of enjoying and preparing various Filipino dishes, deepening their connection to their cultural heritage.

Session #5- Open topic (originally songwriting)

This session differed from others as it was not recorded. Aurora expressed a desire to explore intersectional identities but raised concerns that including this information in the study could potentially compromise her confidentiality within the community. To prioritize ethical considerations and create a safe space for Aurora to navigate these topics, both she and the investigator agreed not to record the session. Later in the conversation, they discussed a separate issue unrelated to intersectional identities—Aurora shared a conflict she had experienced with her roommate, which she felt comfortable including in the study.

Improvisation Prompt #1: *What would you say to your roommate?*

Aurora responded, "I am not your friend." When asked what she would like her roommate to do, Aurora replied, "Get out." These responses were translated into Tagalog and incorporated as chants during a drum-playing session. The chants were organically improvised

and seamlessly interwoven as Aurora and the investigator felt inspired. The investigator also took opportunities to support Aurora by chanting alongside her, reinforcing her self-expression. This session marked the first time both Aurora and the investigator exclusively used Tagalog for the chants in an intentional, therapeutic way.

Chants

Aurora: *Hindi mo ako kaibigan. [Heen-dee moe akoh ka-ee-bee-gan]*

(I am not your friend.)

Investigator: *Lumabas ka [Loo-mah-boss kah].(Get out.)*

In session #6- Songwriting exploring Hiya (Shame)

This session utilized songwriting, with Aurora's request to explore Hiya. The investigator supported Aurora musically, and asked questions when Aurora needed support with lyrics.

Aurora wrote a melody using voice and guitar. Below is Aurora's composition:

Walang Hiya [Wah-long Hee-yuh] (No Shame)

by Aurora © August 2024

Chorus:

They want me because I am

They want me because I am

Walang hiya, walang hiya

Verse:

Am I Filipino enough?

My Hiya kept me from myself.

What am I doing wrong,

if I believe in me and cook great ADOBO???

Chorus:

They want me because I am

They want me because I am

Walang hiya, walang hiya

Not speaking Tagalog

Though participants expressed the ease of participating in events if they spoke Tagalog, it did not prevent them from attending events. Several mentioned appreciation for events that included Tagalog and English translation. There was also mention of leaning on their friends and families who speak Tagalog to translate in real time. However, participants did express the possibility of feeling more connected if they were able to speak and understand Tagalog or other Filipino dialect fluently, as often nuances can be lost in translation to English. This sentiment is not specific to just biracial Filipino Americans. Filipino/a/x Americans of the 1.5 (immigrated from the Philippines as children or adolescents), second (parents immigrated from the Philippines, but individual was born in the US), and third (grandparents immigrated from the Philippines, and parents and the individual was born in the US) generations may also experience the same sentiments and disconnect related to limited or inability to speak Tagalog or other Filipino dialects (Nadal, 2021).

Western Culture

Several opportunities arose to discuss differences between Filipino psychology and Western psychology, as well as specifics regarding Filipino cultural norms that are at odds with Western/American societal norms. In session #1, Lynn explained that the idea of “self-care” goes against Filipino cultural norms, particularly that of Kapwa [kap-wa]. The push to find respite in caring for oneself is an individualistic value of western culture. Lynn identified feeling refreshed

and energized through helping and advocating for others, which can be tied to the nature of Kapwa. One must consider that “self-care” in the individual sense, may not hold true for other cultures that are more collectivistic in nature.

The group discussed their shared experiences related to food in Filipino culture, particularly in the context of attending parties hosted by white friends and family. They discussed the abundance of food at Filipino gatherings and the more modest snack offerings at white homes. One participant shared a story about inviting white classmates over, only to find that no one helped themselves to the tables full of Filipino food. She felt disappointed and worried that the food was not good enough. She later learned that her friends had never attended a Filipino party before and simply did not know how to navigate the cultural expectations. Another participant pointed out that hosting and providing a full meal is a core aspect of Filipino culture, emphasizing that hospitality is a keyway of sharing both culture and Kapwa (interconnectedness).

Concerns of being misdiagnosed based on Western psychology and the Western medical model were discussed, as well as contemplation about how this potentially causes biracial Filipinos to be reluctant to seek therapy and other medical treatments. This led to a discussion on the balancing of Filipino psychology and cultural responsiveness within in the Western psychology system, particularly when Filipino psychology is qualitative in nature and Western psychology is quantitative. Some of the questions raised included: Can you truly balance it? Are quantitative assessments appropriate when collaborating with biracial Filipinos and the Filipino community? How does a therapist navigate the nuances and be culturally responsive?

The investigator found herself disclosing more of her background than she normally would in a Western psychology/medical model setting. It was a delicate balance in sharing more

than usual, but not too much. For one, the investigator is a biracial Filipina with similar lived experience as the participants, the cultural nuances of not sharing would not have been well received, and the approach of using CoMT in a Filipino community space required participation by the investigator.

Connection to Research Questions

There were specific research questions that this study aimed to answer, which the investigator felt were answered primarily through the feedback and responses from the participants in the study.

- 1. In what ways, if any, does culturally focused music making build a sense of community among biracial Filipinx American adults?*

Culturally focused music-making provided a platform for biracial Filipino/a/x American adults to connect with their cultural roots and each other. Participants appreciated how music was used as a tool for exploring identity, as it allowed participants to express and process their cultural experiences, particularly curiosity around cultural values and shared identity. Participants explored the similarities and differences within their shared identities, collectively expressing how authentic it felt not to have to explain their identity to others in the group.

The shared experience of music-making fostered a sense of belonging, bridging gaps between individuals who may have felt disconnected from their heritage or from others in the community. The collaborative and improvisational nature of music-making allowed for organic connections both musically and verbally, reinforcing the sense of community among participants.

After playing the music prompt about feeling connected to their Filipino identity and being asked to reflect on what they noticed in their body compared to the prompt about not feeling connected, Aurora shared:

Just so much more relaxed. Honestly, just so relaxed. For me at least. A freeness in my spirit. It resonated through my whole body. I don't know, I don't want to sound too like, just like, a very tribal feeling. You know. More so this go around. Having so much introspection and dialogue about it. Creating more safety just in our triangle did a lot. Thankfulness. More thankfulness than before. [muffled] At some point, I started to think about times when I felt more connected, and then I just started feeling more present in this moment more. If that makes sense.

Lynn shared:

More open spaciousness here [plays outer rim of drum], and here [plays another spot on drum away from drum center], but more open. The first time I didn't have any visions that came through. I like to make art, so I see things in visions. But this time they did come through. All these images of, thinking of people dancing. Bright colors, reds and yellows. It was interesting, like this time through like it was like more access there, I guess. When I imagined being connected versus the first time, I was more focused on this drum or something. I don't know what it was..... Yeah, I feel like more connected. Yeah, just in that shift of intention to connection. I felt safer...in my environment.

Culturally focused music- prompts provided opportunities to discuss lived experiences, while also opening dialogue to further exploration of family history, immigration, and cultural traditions and expectations. Participants shared that learning about and exploring specific cultural values through music-making made it easier to engage in discussions; while also raising questions they had not thought to ask their Filipino parents and sparking interest in Filipino historical and cultural topics they wanted to explore further. Active music making also provided

an opportunity to incorporate culturally specific values and explore the conscious and unconscious use of these values in their lived experiences.

2. *Does the inability to speak Tagalog or other Filipinx dialects contribute to biracial Filipinx adults' experience of exclusion, both within and outside the Filipino community? What other factors contribute to their sense of exclusion?*

The inability to speak Tagalog or other Filipinx dialects was identified as a source of exclusion within the Filipino community, as biracial Filipino/a/x adults may feel disconnected from those who are fluent in the language, leading to questions of “Am I Filipino Enough?” However, the Filipino community can help mitigate this sense of exclusion by offering events with English translations, continuing to provide language support for friends and family, and creating opportunities for individuals to engage with the language. Other factors contributing to exclusion include colorism, where lighter-skinned Filipino/a/x individuals may struggle to claim their Filipino identity or may not be recognized as Filipino. This highlights the complexity of navigating multiple identities within a predominantly non-Filipino/a/x society. Active music-making, however, offers a way to connect with Filipino culture that does not require speaking Tagalog, making it an inclusive avenue for both Tagalog and non-Tagalog speakers to engage with the culture.

3. *In what ways, if any, does culturally focused music making promote identity exploration for biracial Filipinx American adults?*

Culturally focused music-making promoted identity exploration by offering a creative space where biracial Filipino/a/x American adults could reflect on and express their unique cultural experiences. Music is a pervasive and meaningful element of Filipino culture, and through specific music experiences, participants were able to explore their heritage and the

complexities of their dual identity. The improvisational nature of the sessions provided a creative outlet for participants to process their feelings about their cultural identity, allowing them to explore aspects of their heritage in a safe enough and supportive environment. On several occasions, participants were surprised by the feelings and topics that surfaced during music making.

Lynn shared insights regarding active music making, specifically improvisation:

With the playing, it's interesting how much surfaced within such a short amount of playing. I was skeptical, which made me laugh. Yeah, it was really interesting, here's the frame work [starts playing a basic 4 quarter beat]. Which is just a beat.

After one of the music improvisations, Kim describes what she heard in the music:

Heartbeat. I felt like how I'd feel when thinking about that conversation [with my Mom]. Maybe, a little bit anxious and nervous. I don't know.....When it's conflict, it's hard.

Investigator:.....*Pakikisama. Do you think that ties into social conflict?*

Kim: *Being conflict avoidant, I think....yeah, I'm a people pleaser.*

Aurora mentioned that it would have been difficult to open up and be vulnerable if the investigator had not also shared the identity of biracial Filipino/a/x. Participants shared that having common lived identity experiences and familiarity with the Filipino culture was appreciated because less explanation had to occur and built instant connection. Though, Aurora did mention she would have been okay with another biracial Asian therapist even if they were not a Filipino/a/x individual.

Kim mentioned that in addition to the shared identity and culture, music therapy felt more comfortable and engaging. As part of her current music therapy studies, she participated in counseling, but always found it awkward and unsafe. She attributed part of the awkwardness that

it was not comfortable sharing about her biracial identity with someone who did not share the same identity. Aurora and Kim agreed that as a Filipino cultural norm, one does not usually share personal information or trauma as it is tied with the cultural value of *Hiya* [hee-yuh].

Limitation and Barriers

In this study there were several limitations that warrant consideration. First, the sample size was small, which restricted the diversity of experiences expressed by research participants, as well as age variation. Having more participants would have added to the richness of the data, which would have provided experiences that may have been more relatable across the Filipino diaspora. An increased group size of five to eight would have not only helped to minimize inconsistency with participant attendance, but also addressed monolithic similarities and brought to light more differences within the group. The reliance on self-reported data introduces potential biases, particularly concerning social desirability, which may affect the authenticity of responses. The research was conducted within the specific geographic area of the Portland metro area in Oregon, which may not fully capture the diverse experiences of Filipino/a/x individuals in different settings.

There were several limitations regarding recruitment and involvement. It was challenging to locate specific demographic data on the Filipino/a/x community. The most recent statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau (2021) estimate approximately 21,000 Filipinos reside in Oregon; however, no data was available specifically for the Portland metro area. Among this population, many may not identify as biracial Filipino/a/x, further narrowing the recruitment pool.

The use of the term *Filipinx* posed challenges. While intended to be inclusive, it is primarily a term used by younger Filipino Americans and is not widely recognized or embraced by older generations or those outside specific cultural contexts. The investigator received

multiple inquiries about the meaning of the term, leading to the realization that this effort at inclusivity might have inadvertently excluded potential participants.

Future researchers should consider using *Filipino/a/x* as a more inclusive term to better engage individuals across different ages, generations, and backgrounds within the community. This approach may help ensure broader representation and understanding among potential participants.

Recruitment for the study spanned over seven months, with the initial goal of assembling a group of at least six participants. The study included three participants, whose attendance varied due to factors outside the study's control. One participant attended all six sessions and the focus group discussion. Aurora appreciated the intimacy of the small group but expressed that more consistent attendance from other participants would have enhanced the experience. She suggested that an ideal group size would consist of four participants, as a larger group may hinder discussion due to time constraints of the sessions. Additionally, it must be noted that each session went significantly overtime, sometimes by 45 minutes. It was also suggested that sessions be longer in general.

In hindsight, the investigator recognized that the use of “music therapy,” with a specific emphasis on the word “therapy,” may have unintentionally deterred potential participants. Within the cultural context, mental health remains a sensitive and often stigmatized topic, making it difficult for some individuals to seek support openly. The term “therapy” could have triggered discomfort and possibly *Hiya* as it may be associated with a need for treatment or intervention, which could be seen as a sign of weakness or a sign of social taboo. As a result, this language choice likely impacted the willingness of some individuals to engage with the program.

The process of completing the online pre-survey and obtaining signed informed consent forms presented challenges and delays. The pre-survey consisted of 13 questions, and participants were required to print, sign, and return the consent form to the investigator. Despite the initial belief that providing these materials online would streamline the process, this approach proved less effective. The investigator had to send multiple reminders via text and email and brought printed copies of both the pre-survey and consent forms to the first session, where participants completed them before the session began. This highlighted the need for a more accessible and participant-friendly approach to pre-study documentation.

Music therapy remains relatively unknown as an allied healthcare profession within the Filipino/a/x community. Among the three study participants, only two were aware of music therapy as a licensed healthcare option in Oregon, and both had either studied or were currently studying music therapy in college. The third participant had no prior knowledge of the field. As one of only two known biracial Filipino music therapists in Oregon, I frequently introduce music therapy as a viable healthcare option to members of the community, working to increase awareness and accessibility.

The sessions were held at the Filipino Bayanihan Center (see Community Room Picture, Appendix 3), and while the space had been booked in advance, interruptions occurred several times. Community members sometimes entered the space to retrieve chairs or access the food pantry. These interruptions were resolved after placing a sign on the door indicating a research study was in progress. Additionally, there were concerns about soundproofing arose, particularly during verbal parts of the sessions. To mitigate this, a fan was used to create background noise, helping to mask external sounds and ensure privacy during discussions.

The limitation of only six in-person sessions highlighted the need for deeper exploration over time based on participant request for continuation of group therapy and participation in Filipino community events after the research study was over. This suggests that longer-term engagement could provide more meaningful connections and insights into participants' cultural experiences. Additionally, ongoing support and participation in community activities may strengthen the sense of belonging and cultural identity for the participants.

Recommendations for Future Research

This is the first-ever research study focusing on biracial Filipino/a/x Americans and music therapy. Music holds a central place in Filipino culture, serving as a source of connection, expression, and identity. By acknowledging its cultural significance and accessibility within the Filipino community, music therapy presents itself as a potentially less intimidating and more culturally relevant allied healthcare option.

When considering specific use of language and terms, it is important that researchers and therapists, understand the nuances within the Filipino community (i.e., over 150 dialects, cultural values, stigmas related to therapy, history of colonization, personal/parental immigration status, role of music, religious beliefs). As previously emphasized when thinking about a cross generational study, researchers must consider the general knowledge of inclusivity terms, such as Filipino/a/x and AFAB/AMAB, and how they will be received and understood to potential participants.

Recognizing that mental health and therapy are often considered taboo in the Filipino community, it is recommended to replace terms like "therapy" with more culturally inviting language. For example, instead of naming a group "music therapy," consider calling it "group music wellness" or "group music for resilience." This shift in terminology may make the concept

of mental health support feel more accessible and aligned with the community's values, fostering openness and encouraging participation. By using language that emphasizes well-being and resilience, the stigma surrounding mental health can be reduced.

Regarding recruitment, one must consider different options on how to reach potential participants. A mix of both online and in-person recruitment should be considered, with some attempts at snowballing. Telehealth may also be a platform to utilize to increase the reach of participants and help with diversifying the recruitment pool. However, participant accessibility to online tools and the impact of online group improvisation must be thoroughly reviewed.

Conclusion

This study explored how culturally focused music-making builds community and promotes identity exploration in biracial Filipino/a/x Americans. Based on the findings, the study explored aspects of Filipino identity including specific cultural values and their application (consciously or unconsciously) in their daily life, being otherized by both ethnic communities, as well as emotions triggered when these values are not reciprocated by others within or outside the community. Participants also highlighted the importance of music as a tool for expressing and navigating the duality of their identity. This research underscores the role of cultural creative practices when working to strengthen connections within diasporic communities, specifically the Filipino community.

This study marks a significant step forward in exploring the intersection of biracial Filipino/a/x American identity and music therapy, highlighting the potential of culturally focused music-making as a tool for community building, identity exploration, and emotional healing. The findings underscore the significant role of music in Filipino culture and its potential to bridge

cultural disconnection while fostering a sense of belonging and interconnectedness among biracial individuals.

Despite challenges such as recruitment, attendance variability, and logistical hurdles, the study revealed meaningful insights into how music therapy can address issues of cultural identity and introduce cultural values such as, *Kapwa* (interconnectedness), *Utang Ng Loob* (debt of gratitude), *Pakikisama* (social acceptance and harmony), and *Hiya* (shame). Participants experienced the sessions as spaces for grounding, reflection, learning, and connection, further affirming the relevance of music therapy as an allied healthcare option for Filipino/a/x communities.

This research also brought attention to gaps in representation within the field of music therapy and the need for more Filipino/a/x music therapists who can authentically connect with and serve their communities. Future studies should continue to explore the nuanced experiences of biracial Filipino/a/x individuals, with an emphasis on expanding sample sizes, incorporating intergenerational perspectives, the duality of identity, and deepening cultural specificity in therapeutic practices. By building on this foundational research, music therapy has the potential to evolve as a culturally responsive and impactful modality for addressing the unique needs of biracial Filipino/a/x Americans and the broader Filipino community.

Final Thoughts

It is important to approach topics like identity, culture, and healthcare with sensitivity, particularly when discussing diverse communities. In the case of this research on biracial Filipino/a/x Americans and music therapy, the study has opened a valuable conversation about how culturally focused music-making can serve as a powerful tool for community-building, identity exploration, and healing.

There is a need to encourage the development of more Filipino/a/x community members entering the field of music therapy, as representation within the profession is crucial for fostering trust and understanding. Currently, there are only two Filipino practicing board-certified and Oregon Health Authority licensed music therapists in Oregon, one of which being the investigator. Additionally, music therapy programs could benefit from incorporating culturally specific training to better meet the needs of diverse populations. More research is needed to explore how culturally focused music therapy can address the unique challenges faced by biracial Filipino/a/x individuals, including issues of identity, belonging, and mental health. Expanding studies to include larger, multi-generational samples could further enrich understanding and inform practice.

The findings emphasize the need for greater awareness of music therapy within the Filipino/a/x community and the importance of representation within the field. As future research continues, it is crucial to expand on these initial insights, exploring the unique experiences of biracial individuals while fostering more inclusive and culturally competent practices in allied health professions. By recognizing the deep cultural connections that music holds within Filipino/a/x communities, we can continue to create spaces for healing, growth, and meaningful connection to identity.

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Appendix A

Table 2

Pre-survey questionnaire

Participants	Aurora	Lynn	Kim
How much Tagalog or other Filipinx dialect do you speak?	Less than 20 words.	Less than 5 words.	I have basic language skills.
How old are you?	Age 25 to 34 years old.	Age 35 to 44 years old.	Age 18 to 24 years old.
Please select one of the following Ethnic Identities that you closely identify:	Biracial Filipino/a/x American	Multiethnic Filipino/a/x American	Biracial Filipino/a/x American
-Filipino/a/x American			
-Biracial Filipino/a/x American			
-Multiethnic Filipino/a/x American			
-Not sure, still exploring.			
-Other			

Table 2 (Continued)**Pre-survey questionnaire**

Participants	Aurora	Lynn	Kim
Which biological parent is Filipinx?	Biologically female (Mother)	Biologically male (Father)	Biologically female (Mother)
-Biologically female (Mother)			
-Biologically male (Father)			
How often do you participate in Filipinx community gatherings and events?	Weekly	At least once a month	Did not attend
In the next three months, how many Filipinx community gatherings and events are you planning to attend?	Weekly	At least once a month	No plans to attend
Please select barriers that have impacted your ability to participate in the Filipinx community. Select all that apply.	Not looking Filipinx enough (skin color too light or dark or other features and characteristics)	Financial	Not knowing about events.

Table 2 (Continued)**Pre-survey Questionnaire**

Participants	Aurora	Lynn	Kim
<p>Please select barriers that have impacted your ability to participate in the Filipinx community. Select all that apply.</p>	-Other- Difficulty finding community on my own in the past.		
<p>What do you hope to learn, experience, or contribute to this focus group study?</p>	<p>-Insight for my own emotions around identity.</p> <p>-New perspective on a biracial Filipina experience</p>	<p>How music supports identity in a therapeutic setting.</p>	<p>I want to learn more about the Filipinx community in the Portland area. As well as gain knowledge and experience about how studies are conducted, I am a current undergraduate in Music Therapy.</p>
<p>Have you previously participated in music therapy sessions with a board-certified therapist?</p>	No	Yes	No
<p>What are your initial thoughts about music therapy?</p>	<p>Highly interested! As a musician, I believe that music is like a window</p>	<p>It's great.</p>	<p>I think music is a gift that touches the soul. Music therapy is the tool we use</p>

Table 2 (Continued)**Pre-survey Questionnaire**

Participants	Aurora	Lynn	Kim
What are your initial thoughts about music therapy?	into the soul where expression allows you to “bare all” emotionally and spiritually.		to help others reach goals and benefits their quality of life.
Did you know that music therapy is an allied healthcare profession and requires a healthcare license to practice in Oregon, as well as national board certification?	No	Yes	Yes

Appendix B

Session #1: Kapwa (front page)

Session#1: Kapwa

What is Kapwa?

Kapwa is feeling connected to others, a collective well-being, an interconnectedness through shared culture, a shared identity. It's being part of a whole instead of focusing on self.

Questions

Q: Describe a time when you felt Kapwa. Was there something about the environment, a person around you, a custom, or other element that represented Kapwa?

Q: How about a time when you didn't feel Kapwa?


Q: What Filipino/a/x customs do you practice that embody Kapwa?

Q: What Filipino/a/x customs do you want to learn to invoke Kapwa?

Tagalog Words & Pronunciations

Pronunciations	Words		
	English	Tagalog	Pronunciation
a= pronounced "ah" like in "father"	Hello/Hi	Kamusta	Ka-moo-stah
ay= pronounced "eye" like in "high"	How are you?	Kamusta ka	Ka-moo-sta kah
i= pronounced "ee" like in "meet"	Good	Mabuti	Ma-boo-tee
u= pronounced "oo" like in "boot"	Bad	Hindi	Heen-dee
o= pronounced "oh" like in "orange"	Thank you	Salamat	Sa-la-maht
	Good bye	Paalam	Pa-ah-lam

Sound Wellness Music Therapy, LLC
PO BOX 102, FAIRVIEW, OR 97024 | (971) 444-9311 | JESSICA@SOUNDWELLNESSMT.COM
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Session #1: Kapwa (back page)

Famous Biracial
Filipino/a/x

Musician, Bruno Mars (Mother)

Musician, H.E.R (Mother)

Comedial, Jo Koy (Mother)

Singer, Nicole Scherzinger (Mother)

Actress and Singer, Vanessa Hudgens (Mother)

Singer, Enrique Ingelsias (Mother)

Actor and Musician, Apl.de.Ap from the
Black Eyes Peas (Mother)

Song to check out about Kapwa:

"Waves" by Portland based Filipino rapper, Talilo

Notes:



Session #2: Utang Ng Loob (front page)

Session#2: Utang Ng Loob

What is Utang Ng Loob?

Utang Ng Loob does not have a direct English translation, but the closest is debt of gratitude or inner self, and reciprocity. It's having a sense of obligation to return the favor when someone has helped you, especially in a time of need.

Questions

Q: How has the sense of utang ng loob been practiced as a Filipino/a/x value in your family?

Q: How has the sense of utang ng loob been practiced in your bayanihan?

Q: What do you have pasasalamat for in your Filipino/a/x culture?

Q: What do you have gratitude for in your non-Filipino/a/x culture?

Q: How have you expressed or shown utang ng loob to someone?

Tagalog Words & Pronunciations

Pronunciations

a= pronounced "ah" like in "father"
 ay= pronounced "eye" like in "high"
 i= pronounced "ee" like in "meet"
 u= pronounced "oo" like in "boot"
 o= pronounced "oh" like in "orange"
 oo= pronounced "oh oh"
 ng= pronounced like "ng" in "sing"

Words

<u>Tagalog</u>	<u>Pronunciation</u>	<u>English</u>
bayanihan	by-an-i-han	community
pamilya	pah-meel-ya	family
pasasalamat	pah-sa-sa-la-maht	gratitude
kababayan	ka-ba-by-an	fellow Filipino
Utang ng loob	oo-tang-ng-la-oh-oh-b	debt of gratitude

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Session #2: Utang Ng Loob (back page)

Bayanihan Organizations

- Filipino Bahanihan Center
- Filipino American Association of Portland and Vicinity
- Foundation for Philippine Progress, Inc
- Philippine American Chamber of Commerce of Oregon (PACCO)
- Oregon Filipino American Lawyers Association (OFALA)
- Filipino American Friendship Club of Oregon
- Filipino Club of Salem
- Filipino Catholic Club of Oregon
- National Alliance for Filipino Communities (NAFCON)
- National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA)
- Filipino American Association of Vancouver, Washington
- Council of Filipino American Associations of Oregon and SW Washington (CFAA)

Notes:



Session #3: Hiya (front page)

Session#3: Hiya

What is Hiya?

Hiya is related to Utang ng loob, as it helps to maintain social harmony. Hiya shapes behavior, as it not only impacts an individual's reputation within society, but also that of the family. Hiya can be likened to shame, embarrassment, or self restraint.

Questions

Q: What is an example of Hiya in Filipino/a/x culture?

Q: Has there been a time where you were made to feel Hiya by your family?

Q: What is an example of something that is Hiya in the Filipino culture that isn't in your other ethnic culture?

Follow Up Q: Which identity culture do you agree with regarding Hiya?

Tagalog Words & Pronunciations

Pronunciations

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Words

<u>Tagalog</u>	<u>Pronunciation</u>	<u>English</u>
Hiya	Hee-yuh	Shame
Paumanhin	Pah-oo-mahn-heen	Sorry
Patawad	Pah-tah-wahd	Forgive me!
Hindi ako sang-ayon	Heer-dee a-koh sung-eye-on	I don't agree.
Sige	See-gay	Alright
May masama ba?	My-mah-sahmah bah?	Is there something wrong?

Session #3: Hiya (back page)

Pictures:


(Kipas Foundation, n.d.)

(Wikipedia contributors, n.d.)


(Bamboo Bootcamp, n.d.)

(Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, n.d.)


Filipino Instruments




kalleleng (Bontoc and Kankana'i), Tongali (Ifugao and Kalinga), baling (Isneg)-northern tribes; Lantuy (Cuyunin), Bararek (Tagbuna), Plawta (Mangyan)-central Philippines



Kulintang a tiniok is a Philippine metallophone with 8 metal bars. It is indigenous to Mindanao.




The Bungkaka (bamboo buzzer) is a bamboo percussion (idiophone) instrument played by various indigenous communities in the Philippines, including the Ifugao, Kalinga, and Ibaloi.



Kalaleng or tongali (nose flute) is used in ceremonies in the north. It's believe that playing to rice fields helps rice grow.

Notes:

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Session #4: Pakikisama (front page)

Session#4: Pakikisama

What is Pakikisama?

Pakikisama encompasses the idea of harmony, particularly social cohesion, cooperation, and ability to work as part of a community. Another way to think of it is getting along with others.

Questions

Q: What does pakikisama (harmony) in family, friends, or another group mean to you?

Q: How does pakikisama affect your relationships with family, friends, or colleagues?

Q: Can you share an example of a situation where pakikisama didn't feel right to you?

Q: How might you address pakikisama if it is at odds with your boundaries?

Tagalog Words & Pronunciations

Pronunciations

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Words

<u>Tagalog</u>	<u>Pronunciation</u>	<u>English</u>
Pakikisama	Pah-kee-kee-sahmah	Harmony
Damayan	Dah-my-ahn	Mutual Aid
Pakikiramay	Pah-kee-kee-rah-my	Compassion
Bayanihan	By-ah-knee-hahn	Community
<u>Phrase:</u> Sa pakikisama, nagiging magaan ang trabaho.		
<u>Pronunciation:</u> Sah pah-kee-kee-sahmah nah-gee-geeng mah-gah-ahn ahng trah-bah-ho		
<u>English:</u> Through camaraderie, work becomes easier.		

Session #4: Pakikisama (back page)

Filipino Historical Events

The Arrival of Ferdinand Magellan (1521): Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese explorer leading a Spanish expedition, arrived in the Philippines. His arrival marked the beginning of Spanish colonization.

Spanish Colonization (1565-1898): The Philippines was colonized by Spain for over 300 years, significantly influencing its culture, religion, and society.

The Galleon Trade (1565-1815): The Manila-Acapulco Galleon Trade connected the Philippines with Mexico and Spain, facilitating economic exchange and cultural influences.

The Revolt of Lakandula and Sulayman (1574): Early resistance against Spanish rule led by local leaders in Manila.

The British Occupation of Manila (1762-1764): During the Seven Years' War, British forces briefly occupied Manila, showing the vulnerability of Spanish colonial rule.

The Execution of José Rizal (1896): José Rizal, a Filipino nationalist and writer, was executed by the Spanish, sparking greater resistance against colonial rule and inspiring the Philippine Revolution.

The Philippine Revolution (1896-1898): A national uprising against Spanish rule led by the Katipunan, a revolutionary society founded by Andres Bonifacio.

The Declaration of Philippine Independence (1898): General Emilio Aguinaldo declared Philippine independence from Spain on June 12, 1898, in Kawit, Cavite.

The Spanish-American War (1898): The war led to the Treaty of Paris, wherein Spain ceded the Philippines to the United States, marking the beginning of American colonization.

The Philippine-American War (1899-1902): Filipino forces fought against American colonizers in a bid for independence, resulting in significant casualties and the eventual establishment of American control.

The Commonwealth of the Philippines (1935-1946): The Philippines was granted a transitional government, preparing for full independence, with Manuel L. Quezon as its first president.

Japanese Occupation (1942-1945): During World War II, Japan occupied the Philippines, leading to widespread atrocities and resistance from Filipino and American forces.

The Battle of Leyte Gulf (1944): A crucial battle in World War II, leading to the liberation of the Philippines from Japanese occupation.

Philippine Independence (1946): The Philippines officially gained independence from the United States on July 4, 1946.

Martial Law (1972-1981): President Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law, leading to a period of authoritarian rule, human rights abuses, and economic decline.

People Power Revolution (1986): A peaceful uprising that led to the ousting of President Ferdinand Marcos and the restoration of democracy under President Corazon Aquino.

Mount Pinatubo Eruption (1991): One of the largest volcanic eruptions of the 20th century, causing widespread devastation and affecting global climate.

Moro Conflict: An ongoing conflict between the Philippine government and various Moro groups seeking autonomy or independence in Mindanao, resulting in various peace agreements and continuous efforts for resolution.

Notes: _____

Session #5 and 6: Cultural Value Review and Songwriting (front page)

Session#6: Cultural Value Review

Recap of Cultural Values

Kapwa is feeling connected to others, a collective well-being, an interconnectedness through shared culture, a shared identity.

Utang Ng Loob does not have a direct English translation, but the closest is debt of gratitude or inner self, and reciprocity.

Hiya shapes behavior, as it not only impacts an individual's reputation within society, but also that of the family. Hiya can be liken to shame, embarrassment, or self restraint.

Pakikisama encompasses the idea of harmony, particularly social cohesion, cooperation, and ability to work as part of a community.

Themes

Q: What Themes stood out to you for each value?

1. Kapwa
2. Utan Ng Loob
3. Hiya
4. Pakikisama

Q: Is there a cultural value that you want to incorporate more into your every day?

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kababayan	ka-ba-by-an	fellow Filipino
Paumanhin	Pah-oo-mahn-heen	sorry
Paalam	Pa-ah-lam	good bye
Mabuhay	Mah-boo-high	to live

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Appendix C

Filipino Bayanihan Center- Research Study Space

Portland, Oregon

