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What is Music Therapy ?

Music therapy is the systematic, scientific, and creative application of music to aid in the achievement of specific therapeutic goals and to attain and maintain health and well being. Music therapy is an established health service similar to occupational therapy and physical therapy. As a holistic treatment approach, music therapy focuses on the well being of the entire person, not just the part which is diseased or in distress.

Why Music Therapy ?

Music therapy is a cost-effective therapy that really works! It is effective in meeting the physical, psychological, cognitive, social, and spiritual needs of the people it serves. Music therapy has been proven effective by hundreds of scientific research studies and articles, and by centuries of use in cultures throughout the world. Music therapy has also been shown to have physiological effects on heart-rate, blood pressure, immune system responses, and neurological function.

Music Therapists work in:

Hospitals
 Long Term Care Facilities
 Assisted Living Facilities
 Hospice
 Home Care
 Rehabilitation Centers
 Clinics
 Psychiatric Care Facilities
 Schools
 Child Daycare settings
 Adult Daycare settings

Music Therapy helps people with:

Chronic Illness/Disease
 Terminal Disease
 Developmental Disorders
 Psychiatric Disorders
 Psychological Trauma
 Grief / Loss Issues
 Emotional / Spiritual crisis
 Chronic & Acute Pain
 Anxiety & Depression
 Alzheimer's / Dementia
 Neurological Disorders
 Everyday Stress
 Sensory Impairments
 Chemical Dependency
 Labor & Delivery

Music Therapy helps with:

Stress Management
 Pain Management
 Relaxation
 Meditation / Imagery
 Motor Coordination
 Socialization
 Reality Orientation
 Treatment Tolerance
 Expression of Emotion
 Communication
 Achievement of
 OT & PT goals
 Anxiety Reduction
 Sensory Stimulation
 Cognitive Stimulation
 Recreational Enjoyment
 Reminiscence
 Improving Quality of Life
 Patient/Client Satisfaction

Who Are Music Therapists ?

Music Therapists are individuals who receive five years of extensive training and education in the fields of music, psychology, physiology, education, and courses specific to music therapy. During coursework, a music therapist also receives 40-60 hours of clinical training. Upon completion of coursework, a music therapist must receive 1040 hours of clinical training. Music therapists then go on to take a test for board certification upon completion of the internship.

Music Therapy Key Concepts

Iso-Principle- a term that describes matching the mood or physiological state of a person, and gradually changing that state using music. (Example: if a person is agitated, the therapist may start with agitated music, and then gradually calm the music with the client).

Sedative Music- music that is slower in tempo (< 50 – 80 beats per minute). Smooth sustained phrases, less rhythmic, limited range, gentle music. This music decreased heart and respiration rate & creates feelings of relaxation.

Stimulative Music- Music that is faster in tempo (80 – 200 < beats per minute). More rhythmic, less sustained phrases, may have leaps in melody. This music will increase heart and respiration rate, and tends to be a good source of motivation.

Tips for the creative use of music with older adults

- Encourage discussion & reminiscence with music
 - discuss lyrics
 - use music to facilitate discussion of certain themes
 - example: use “*In The Good Old Summertime*” to begin a discussion of summer memories.
 - discuss the era of the music
 - what events happened this same year?
 - what fashion styles were worn
 - any famous sports achievements
 - what were you doing in this time period (college, working, etc.)?
 - who was president?
- Incorporate live music into programming whenever possible
- Active music participation is better than passive listening
- Use music with a good beat to accompany exercise and movement activities
- Ask client and client’s family about preferred styles of music and/or favorite songs
- Use preferred sedative music in the evenings to promote relaxation, sleep, and to reduce sundowning behavior.
- When a client is agitated try using live or recorded sedative or iso-based music
- If music is played anywhere in your facility, make sure it is the music your clients prefer- not the music you or other employees prefer. Much of today’s music will agitate an older adult with dementia. Also avoid radio stations with excessive commercials, as they tend to contribute to confusion. Also beware of televisions and excessive volume.
- Use music to accompany and enhance other creative arts activities.
- Watch for subtle responses to music- people usually demonstrate some response- even in late stages of dementia or the dying process.
- A client does not have to be a musician to benefit from, or participate in music activities or music therapy.
- If using instruments, demonstrate how each instrument is played, before giving it to a client
- Encourage participation from visiting family and friends when appropriate. Music allows them to share a positive experience with their loved one.
- When using religious music, be sure to be sensitive to the religious backgrounds of all residents involved.
- Encourage and maintain eye contact- be at eye level
- Be patient