

Music Therapy

Sojourn Solutions

Caregiver Support Group
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Music Therapy at Sojourn Solutions

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MUSIC THERAPY is the clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish individualized goals within a therapeutic relationship by a credentialed professional who has completed an approved music therapy program. (*American Music Therapy Association definition, 2005*)

In other words, music therapy is simply the use of music to accomplish non-musical goals, generally related to the improvement or maintenance of mental and physical health. Clients do *not* need a background in music to benefit.

MUSIC THERAPISTS receive a thorough education not only in music but also in psychology, sociology, human development, anatomy, physiology, research methods, and the history, principles, and application of music therapy. In addition to earning at least a bachelor's degree from a college or university approved by the American Music Therapy Association (AMTA), individuals must also complete several clinical experiences and a six-month clinical internship under the close supervision of an experienced music therapist. They must then pass a standardized exam given by the Certification Board for Music Therapists to become a board-certified music therapist (MT-BC).

Music therapists work with a variety of **AGES** and **POPULATIONS** in a variety of **SETTINGS** including (but not being limited to) the following:

- schools
- medical/psychiatric hospitals
- rehabilitative facilities
- drug and alcohol treatment centers
- prisons
- senior centers
- adult day programs/respite centers
- nursing facilities
- hospice programs
- private practices

Music therapy **GOALS** may include (but again are not limited to) the following:

- teach academic skills (ie. the alphabet, states, etc.)
- increase eye contact and attention span
- improve eye-hand coordination, fine/gross motor skills, and balance
- provide opportunities for appropriate social interaction and cooperation
- develop self-esteem and self-confidence
- encourage verbal and nonverbal communication and the expression of emotions within a non-threatening, success-oriented, and fun environment.

<http://www.musictherapy.org/>

Music Therapy & Dementia

How Does Music Therapy Make A Difference For Older Adults?

Music therapy with older adults is designed to increase wellness, decrease pain, enhance memory, improve communication and social interaction, increase motivation for other forms of treatment, facilitate movement and physical/occupational rehabilitation, and help clients and their families manage stress, build emotional support, and express their feelings.

Research has shown music therapy to be effective with older adults who have physical, psychological, cognitive, and social deficits, even when they are resistive to other forms of treatment. Music provides a form of sensory stimulation while still allowing clients to feel secure in the familiarity of the music utilized.

Research highlights include (but of course are not limited to) the following:

- Music therapy reduces depression among older adults.
- Music therapy enhances social/emotional skills, assists with recall/language skills, and decreases the frequency of agitated/aggressive behaviors, including wandering.
- Even in the late stages of dementia, individuals respond to and interact with music.

What Would A Music Therapy Session Look Like With Older Adults?

Music therapists assess the strengths and needs of each client then develop treatments plans, goals, and objectives to develop these strengths and meet these needs. Depending on the treatment goals, sessions may be held for individuals or groups and may include the following interventions (limited only by the creativity of the music therapist):

- Music experiences (sing-a-longs, listening groups, etc.)
- Song composition
- Movement with music
- Instrumental improvisation
- Instrument instruction

These strategies provide opportunities for the following:

- Memory recall and reminiscence (increased satisfaction with life, bond with caregiver)
- Improved mood and reduction in pain, stress, and anxiety (client and caregiver)
- Successful experiences and opportunities for choices and control in their lives
- Increased awareness of self and environment from attention to music
- Sensory stimulation and increased interest in present
- Improvement in rhythmic and continuous movement and vocal fluency (PT/OT/speech)
- Emotional intimacy and social interaction with families, peers, and caregivers

In addition, music therapy provides the **family** with respite, relaxation, increased reminiscence, shared positive experiences, and further intimacy through verbal and nonverbal interaction.

Music Therapy & Mental Health

How Does Music Therapy Make A Difference For Adults With Mental Health Needs?

Music therapy is an established health service for adults with mental health needs, similar to physical or occupational therapy. Research has shown music therapy to be effective with adults who have physical, psychological, cognitive, and social deficits, even when they are resistive to other forms of treatment. For clients with mental health concerns, music becomes a means of communication and expression with the aim of helping them address issues they may not be able to using words alone.

Research highlights include (but of course are not limited to) the following:

- Music therapy decreases muscle tension and anxiety/agitation.
- Music therapy increases self-image/self-esteem, verbalization, motivation, interpersonal relationships, and group cohesiveness.
- Music therapy also provides a safe place for clients to experience emotional release.

What Would A Music Therapy Session Look Like For Adults With Mental Health Needs?

Music therapists assess the strengths and needs of each client then develop treatments plans, goals, and objectives to develop these strengths and meet these needs. Depending on the treatment goals, sessions may be held for individuals or groups and may include active music making, music listening (lyric analysis), and subsequent discussion.

These strategies provide opportunities for the following:

- Exploration of personal feelings and therapeutic issues
- Increased mood, self-awareness, coping/relaxation skills, reality testing, problem-solving abilities, social interaction, independence, concentration/attention span, positive behaviors, and conflict resolution
- Successful experiences and opportunities for decision-making and control in their lives
- Verbal and nonverbal expression
- Stronger peer and family relationships

As always, music therapists work as part of an interdisciplinary team to assess the clients' emotional well-being, physical health, social functioning, communication abilities, and cognitive skills through their musical responses.

Compiled from the American Music Therapy Association website (<http://www.musictherapy.org/>).

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Please feel free to visit the AMTA website or contact me if you have further questions.

It is an honor for me to get to know and work with your loved ones!

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