



Music Therapy and Seniors

What is Music Therapy?

Music therapy is an evidence-based allied health service similar to physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech-language pathology that uses music as the therapeutic tool to address physical, cognitive, social, emotional, psychological, spiritual, and/or behavioral needs.

Why Should I Try Music Therapy?

- Due to the motivational factors provided by music and the brain and body's response to music, music therapists can sometimes gain positive responses where others were unable to reach them.
- Music is a part of everyday life, especially for seniors. Music therapy provides a natural, non-threatening, fun, and reinforcing way to address needs in all domains (physical, cognitive, social, emotional, spiritual and behavioral).
- Music therapists can help clients control pain, discomfort, shortness of breath, and anxiety.
- Music therapy can structure interaction between clients, families, and friends which is particularly beneficial when clients may not recognize loved ones, when young children are involved, and/or for people struggling with end of life issues.
- Music therapy can help people maintain physical and cognitive abilities, helping them to be as independent as possible in activities of daily living.

How Do I Know if Someone is Qualified to Provide Music Therapy Services?

- Qualified music therapists carry the credential **MT-BC** indicating that they have passed the national, independent certification board exam and have maintained awareness of current practice through continuing education or retesting. **DO NOT** work with anyone claiming to be a music therapist without the MT-BC designation.
- **To confirm MT-BC status go to: http://www.cbmt.org/certificant_search**
- Music therapists may carry the designation of Neurologic Music Therapist, which means that they have undergone additional training in this specific model of music therapy. Neurologic Music Therapist Fellow indicates that they have successfully passed advanced training & peer review of Neurologic Music Therapy techniques.
- It is highly recommended that those with neurologic issues (stroke, Parkinson's, TBI) work primarily with Neurologic Music Therapy Fellows, or if they are not available in your area, Neurologic Music Therapists.



Client Benefits from Music Therapy

Physical

- Decrease pain, tension, discomfort, and shortness of breath
- Increase comfort/relaxation
- Increase range of motion and flexibility
- Increase strength and endurance while decreasing fatigue and recovery time
- Improve circulation
- Increase coordination
- Decrease nausea and vomiting

Cognitive

- Heighten cognitive ability
- Facilitate reminiscence
- Improve or maintain intelligibility of speech
- Improve short- and long-term memory
- Improve expressive communication
- Improve receptive communication
- Increase sensory stimulation

Emotional, Spiritual and Psychosocial

- Improve mood
- Improve affect
- Provide emotional support
- Provide spiritual support
- Structure social interactions and decrease isolation
- Increase opportunities for personal choice
- Decrease fear, stress, and anxiety
- Increase interest, esteem, and coping ability
- Increase self-expression
- Increase satisfaction with life
- Increase sense of belonging
- Enhance self-identity
- Increase frequency of successful experiences
- Increase awareness of self and others