



# Music Therapy In Geriatrics and Memory Care

## WHAT IS MUSIC THERAPY?

An established health profession using music-based interventions to address the physical, cognitive, social and emotional needs of children and adults with special needs (AMTA, 2016).

## WHAT DOES A MUSIC THERAPY SESSION LOOK LIKE?

Your Board Certified Music Therapist will collaborate with the resident and facility to determine the specific needs that music therapy might help to address. Music (often live) and rhythm is provided within the interventions to progress toward the discussed goals. As in all therapies, interaction is encouraged. However, there are many ways that the resident can interact without singing or playing an instrument. Absolutely no musical skill or background is needed to be successful within a music therapy session.

## WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF MUSIC THERAPY?

People often relate music and relaxation. That is one goal the music therapist may discuss with you. However, other goals may include pain management, increasing speech, improving mood, increasing physical movement or helping someone express their thoughts or needs. Other goals may address feelings of isolation, spiritual distress or confusion, or even simply allowing the family to interact together.

## WHAT IF MY LOVED ONE IS ILL OR HARD OF HEARING?

Music therapists are trained to assess the needs of the resident each time the session begins. They can also speak with you about specific goals for that day. The goal may be to help relax and focus away from pain or discomfort, provide stimulation to the brain and sensory system, or help an individual become more alert and interactive. While one component of music therapy is hearing the music, other lesser-known components are *feeling* the music in rhythm and vibrations as well as seeing. Music has a wider range of pitches than speaking, so one is more likely to hear music over a conversation.

## IS MUSIC THERAPY SIMILAR TO ENTERTAINMENT?

People use music in a variety of ways. Music entertainment is different from music therapy just as an exercise class at a fitness club is different from physical therapy. While never the goal itself, we hope that a “side-effect” of music therapy treatment is enjoyment and fun!

## WHAT IS A BOARD CERTIFIED MUSIC THERAPIST?

- Has earned a *minimum* bachelor’s degree in music therapy specifically.
- Completed four years of coursework and 1,200 hours of supervised clinical training (typically a six month, full time internship).
- A national board certification exam follows internship. Once complete, the individual may practice as a professional music therapist (MT-BC).

## WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF MUSIC THERAPY?

Music therapy is not new! Music in healthcare has been used for centuries and organized music therapy began in the 1940’s. Music in healthcare has been researched since the 19<sup>th</sup> century and hundreds of articles have been published in dozens of healthcare journals.



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## Need More Information?

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