

Music Therapy

Music therapy is a popular and historic health psychology practice which uses the physical, emotional, mental, aesthetic and spiritual facets of music to help people improve their overall health. When ill people are able to express themselves creatively through music therapy, they can release negative feelings and emotions in an effective and productive way.

Music therapy protocol

Music therapy protocol is designed to perform several functions:

- to direct attention away from pain or anxiety, distracting the listener with comforting music;
- to provide a musical stimulus for rhythmic breathing;
- to offer a rhythmic structure for systematic release of body tension;
- to cue positive visual imagery;
- to condition a deep relaxation response;
- to change mood;
- to focus on positive thoughts and feelings and to celebrate life.

Historical Use of Music Therapy

Music therapy was already present in Greek mythology, philosophy and Native American culture. In our recent history, music therapy was a prominent resource during World War I and World War II: community musicians volunteered their time and played for veterans and the wounded in hospitals. Both patients and nurses noticed a difference in mood and experienced a positive emotional response to the music; nurses noticed an improvement in their patients' outlook and the same patients reported a decrease in pain. The music was so well received that doctors began hiring musicians to play for soldiers.

Physical Benefits

Listening and playing music, as well as song writing and singing, helps to reduce pain among patients, and music therapy can help to relieve discomfort and anxiety, also causing some physiological changes, including:

- improved respiration,
- lower blood pressure,
- improved cardiac output,
- reduced heart rate, and
- relaxed muscle tension.

Mental Benefits


Music is also a remedy for psychological stress. Individuals often associate a sound or song with moods, memories and sensations, from happiness, to tranquillity, from energy to relaxation.

There is strong scientific evidence supporting the use of music therapy for mood enhancement and anxiety and stress relief. People who have autism spectrum disorders often show a heightened interest and response to music. This may aid in the teaching of verbal and non-verbal communication skills and in establishing normal developmental processes.

In older adults with Alzheimer's, dementia, and other mental disorders, music therapy has been found to reduce aggressive or agitated behaviour, reduce symptoms of dementia, improve mood, and improve cooperation with daily tasks.


Adapted from: <https://petersonfamilyfoundation.org/news/health-benefits-of-music-therapy/>
#:~:text=Music%20therapy%20is%20used%20to,as%20emotional%20and%20behavioral%20problems

to cue: *indurre*
enhancement: *miglioramento*
dementia: *demenza*
facet: *sfaccettatura*
heightened: *maggiore*
overall: *complessivamente*
outlook: *aspetto*
to release: *rilasciare*
to relieve: *alleviare*
to relief: *alleviare*
wounded: *ferito*

1  **Answer the questions.**


1. What features of music help people to improve their health?
2. What are the purposes of music therapy protocol?
3. What are the origins of music therapy?
4. When was music therapy employed in the 20th century?
5. What are the physical benefits of music therapy?
6. What are the mental benefits of music therapy?
7. How does music therapy help people suffering from autism spectrum disorders?
8. How does music therapy affect older adults suffering from dementia or other mental disorders?



2  **PAIR WORK** Read the short text and then think of some movies where music plays a particular role and give reasons.

Music in cinema is extremely important because it serves as a bridge to establish a connection between the plot and the emotions that are conveyed to the viewer. Film music composers know very well that soundtracks affect the brain, so they control and make use of the power of music to stimulate certain emotions.

In horror movies music plays a vital role in generating fear and anguish; in action films this same impulse is used to accelerate the viewer's heart rate and promote the feeling of anxiety during some scenes; in suspense films music invites to reflection... Music is always present in films.

3  **Write about an experience of yours with music and its positive effects on your feelings.**
Use about 60-80 words.

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