

## ...So What IS Music Therapy, Anyway?



**MUSIC THERAPY** is the clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions by an accredited music therapist to promote, maintain, and restore mental, emotional, physical, social, and spiritual health. The music therapist develops individualized goals based on the client's abilities, preferences, and needs, then implements the appropriate music-based interventions which most effectively address those goals. Within the therapeutic relationship, objectives such as self-expression, communication, and personal development can be pursued using music.

A **MUSIC THERAPIST** is a health professional who must...

- Have completed a minimum four-year Bachelor of Music Therapy degree. University coursework consists of supervised clinical fieldwork and academic study in the areas of music therapy research, music, psychology, and biology
- Be accredited by the Canadian Association for Music Therapy (MTA credential), a process which entails completing a 1000-hour supervised clinical internship and successfully pass a Board Certification exam
- Be an accomplished musician proficient in piano, guitar, voice, and percussion
- Be skilled in verbal counseling techniques



### **MUSIC THERAPY INTERVENTIONS**

One of the most common questions music therapists are asked is, “What do you actually DO in a music therapy session?” This can be difficult to answer, since sessions are tailored for the individual or group with whom the music therapist is working. Depending on the needs of the client, some frequently used interventions include the following:

**Improvising...** Structured and spontaneous music-making provides a non-threatening means for the expression of both positive and negative emotions, while encouraging communication through music.



**Listening...** Depending on the type, listening to music can be a relaxing experience—slowing heart rate, regulating breathing, and easing muscle tension; or an invigorating one—stimulating positive energy, elevating mood, and deflecting negative thoughts.

**Songwriting...** Composing music and writing lyrics gives clients a socially appropriate vehicle to organize thoughts and emotions, and the satisfaction of creating something tangible.

**Movement...** Music motivates movement! Music therapists are trained to utilize rhythm and sound-based techniques to advance gross and fine motor skills, improve muscle tone, enhance balance, and increase range of motion.

**Music and Imagery...** Pairing music with associated images in the client's mind encourages self-exploration and induces relaxation, providing a non-pharmaceutical approach to stress management. Progressive Muscle Relaxation can also be incorporated for optimal mental and physical release.

**Playing Instruments...** Vocal and instrumental instruction and exploration can give the client a sense of accomplishment and the freedom to express through music what cannot be said with words. (Not to mention, it's fun!)

**WHO CAN BENEFIT?** Music therapists work with a variety of populations in both one-on-one and group settings, including...

- Obstetrics/Neonatal care
- Developmental disabilities
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Speech/language impairments
- At-risk youth
- Emotional trauma victims
- Mental health
- Addiction recovery
- Neurological impairments (stroke, ABI)
- The "Walking Wounded"
- Physical disabilities
- Acute/chronic pain
- Oncology
- Geriatric care & Alzheimer's/dementia
- Palliative (end-of-life) care



**HOW DOES IT HELP?** Music therapy goals are client-specific, but may include...

- Positive outlet for self-expression
- Promote verbal and non-verbal communication
- Increase self-esteem
- Improve interpersonal/social skills
- Motor skill development/rehabilitation
- Improve concentration
- Stress/anxiety management
- Improve emotional stability
- Pain control
- Improve reality orientation
- Enhance memory



**For further information, please visit [www.arpeggiomusictherapy.com](http://www.arpeggiomusictherapy.com)**

# Goals & Benefits



## How can music therapy help?

Based on an assessment and ongoing evaluation of a client's needs, goals that can be worked toward in music therapy might include the following:

### I. Cognitive Domain

- 🎵 Improve reality orientation
- 🎵 Provide intellectual stimulation
- 🎵 Improve short-term and long-term memory
- 🎵 Stimulate concentration and improve focus

### II. Emotional Domain

- 🎵 Decrease stress/anxiety level
- 🎵 Increase self esteem
- 🎵 Encourage general emotional stability
- 🎵 Improve mood
- 🎵 Provide a positive outlet for self-expression

### III. Physical Domain

- 🎵 Increase range of motion
- 🎵 Improve mobility
- 🎵 Decrease pain perception
- 🎵 Improve gross/fine motor skills

### IV. Social Domain

- 🎵 Improve social/interpersonal skills
- 🎵 Decrease feelings of isolation
- 🎵 Improve communication skills

### V. Spiritual Domain

- 🎵 Meet religious/spiritual needs
- 🎵 Encourage a general sense of well-being

# The History of Music Therapy



Many people are surprised to learn that the concept of using music as a medium for healing has been around for hundreds of years. In fact, Aristotle and Plato both documented music's ability to affect our emotions, behaviour, and overall health.

Music therapy as we know it today began after World War I and II, when community musicians (both amateur and professional) began visiting veterans' hospitals to share the gift of music with soldiers suffering from physical and emotional trauma from the wars. These veterans were said to be experiencing "shell shock"—a condition we now refer to as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Medical staff soon began to notice the positive responses the veterans were experiencing as a result of the music, leading hospitals to begin hiring musicians to continue this work full-time. It soon became evident that "hospital musicians," as they were called at the time, required some prior training before working in a medical setting and so the demand grew for a college curriculum.

The first music therapy degree program in the world was founded in 1944 at Michigan State University. Today, there are over seventy of these programs in the U.S. and five in Canada. There are currently about 500 accredited music therapists in Canada, with three practicing in the province of New Brunswick.

## Did You Know...?



- Music is processed in both the left and right hemispheres of the brain. In fact, very few activities engage as many parts of the brain as music can.
- Research has shown that music with a strong beat can stimulate brainwaves to resonate in sync with the beat: faster beats bring about sharper concentration and more alert thinking, and slower tempos promote a calm, meditative state.
- Studies show that children who learn to play a musical instrument score higher in the domains of creativity, memory, spatial awareness, mathematics, language, emotional intelligence, and self esteem.
- Music that you enjoy can improve your mood by boosting production of the neurotransmitters epinephrine and norepinephrine.
- Music can stimulate the bond between mother and baby. Studies show that babies in utero respond to music even before their hearing develops at five months, proving that the vibrations of a strong, steady rhythm play a key role.
- Listening to music before bedtime can help insomnia. Relaxing music reduces sympathetic nervous system activity and helps to decrease anxiety, blood pressure, heart, and respiratory rates. It can also aid in regulating the body's production of melatonin, the hormone responsible for controlling sleep cycles.