Music Therapy: Reaching those with Brain Related Disorders When Words Fail

Karen Cotta, MDiv, MSW, MT-BC
Music Therapy

• Training in Music Therapy

• “Music Therapy” – a field of practice
What Music Therapy is NOT

These examples of therapeutic music are noteworthy, but are not clinical music therapy:

- A person with Alzheimer’s listening to an iPod with headphones of his/her favorite songs
- Groups such as Bedside Musicians, Musicians on Call, Music Practitioners, Sound Healers, and Music Thanatologists
- Celebrities performing at hospitals and/or schools
- A piano player in the lobby of a hospital
- Nurses playing background music for patients
- Artists in residence
- Arts educators
- A high school student playing guitar in a nursing home
- A choir singing on the pediatric floor of a hospital
What Music Therapy IS

- Work with Congresswoman Giffords to regain her speech after surviving a bullet wound to her brain.
- Work with older adults to lessen the effects of dementia.
- Work with children and adults to reduce asthma episodes.
- Work with hospitalized patients to reduce pain.
- Work with children who have autism to improve communication capabilities.
- Work with premature infants to improve sleep patterns and increase weight gain.
- Work with people who have Parkinson’s disease to improve motor function.
Validation Therapy and music:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CrZXz10FcVM
Alzheimer’s Disease and Dementia

- Memory recall which contributes to reminiscence and satisfaction with life
- Positive changes in mood and emotional states
- Sense of control over life through successful experiences
- Awareness of self and environment which accompanies increased attention to music
- Anxiety and stress reduction for older adult and caregiver
- Nonpharmacological management of pain and discomfort
- Stimulation which provokes interest even when no other approach is effective
- Structure which promotes rhythmic and continuous movement or vocal fluency as an adjunct to physical rehabilitation
- Emotional intimacy when spouses and families share creative music experiences
- Social interaction with caregivers and families
How Does Music Therapy Help Families?

- A forum to share common experiences and enjoyment as a couple or family
- Meaningful time spent together in a positive, creative way
- Relaxation for the entire family Stimulation for reminiscence of family bonds
- Unity and intimacy for families through verbal and nonverbal interaction
- Respite for the caregiver
Autism

- Improving communication, interpersonal skills, personal responsibility, and play
- Elicit joint attention
- Enhance auditory processing, other sensory-motor, perceptual/motor, or gross/fine motor skills
- Identify and appropriately express emotions
- Increase social engagement in the home environment and community
- Using musically adapted social stories may modify target behavior and teach new skills
Problems addressed include PTSD, traumatic brain injury (TBI and mTBI), major depression, polytrauma, substance abuse, family conflict, and suicide risk.

There are a wide variety of interventions that address the physical, mental, and social-emotional impact of military service.
Music therapy (using cognitive-behavioral methods and imagery) can help to relieve pain and reduce stress and anxiety for the patient, resulting in physiological changes, including:

- Improved respiration
- Lower blood pressure
- Improved cardiac output
- Reduced heart rate
- Relaxed muscle tension
Special Education

- Down’s Syndrome, ADHD, Cerebral Palsy, etc.
- Address the whole child - cognitive, behavioral, physical, emotional, communication and social skills.
- Music provides motivation and structure
- Music Therapy is often covered by Medicaid Part B services and can address the child’s IEP goals
Find a Music Therapist Near You

- findMT@musictherapy.org
- https://www.musictherapy.org/about/find/
Let’s Jam!