

Music Therapy: An Introduction



Beth H. Friedman-Romell, PhD, LPMT, MT-BC, NMT™

What is Music Therapy?

Music Therapy is "the clinical & evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish individualized goals within a therapeutic relationship, provided by a credentialed professional who has completed an approved music therapy program."

(<https://www.musictherapy.org/about/musictherapy/>)

Music Therapy can help people...

- Enhance focus and concentration
- Express feelings
- Improve communication
- Improve executive function
- Sustain motor and speech functions for people with movement disorders
- Recover from a stroke
- Reduce acute and chronic pain
- Relieve stress, anxiety and depression
- Support memory for people with Alzheimer's and other dementias

Is it Music Therapy?

Music Therapy

- Client and Clinician in therapeutic relationship
- Uses Music to achieve Non-Music Goals
- Regulated Training, Certification and Licensure, Continuing Education and Documentation
- Both *Receptive* and *Expressive* modalities

Music Enrichment

- Typically, recreational
- May be provided by a variety of practitioners
- Goals are enhanced quality of life, socialization

Sound Healing

- Typically, *Receptive* for the client
- Goals relate to relaxation, reducing anxiety/stress, healing body, mind and spirit
- Training standards vary; no standardized training or continuing education requirements

Therapeutic Musicianship

- Typically seen in hospital and hospice settings
- Professional or volunteer musician plays “for” patient
- Does not emphasize therapeutic relationship or specific goals

Training

Music Therapists:

- **Complete a rigorous undergraduate academic program and 1200 hours of clinical field training**
- **Demonstrate proficiency in voice, piano, guitar, and percussion**
- **Pass a national Board exam**
- **Achieve at least 100 hours of continuing education credits every 5 years**
- **In Ohio, Music Therapists must be licensed by the Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage and Family Therapist Board in order to practice.**

Music and the Brain

- Rhythm "entrains" neurons to fire in sync with each other, which supports motor function, biological functions such as heart rate and breathing, and social connection.
- Familiar melodies and harmonies stimulate the production of "feel good" hormones that regulate mood; they also trigger memories.
- Learning to play an instrument increases the number of neurons which connect the two sides of the brain, improving hemispheric communication and motor skills.

Let's see the brain on music in action!

<https://www.ucf.edu/pegasus/your-brain-on-music/>

Neurologic Music Therapy® (NMT™)

“A standardized system of clinical techniques that use the functional perception of all properties of music to train and retrain brain and behavior function. The NMT™ Techniques are implemented by therapists who have received advanced professional training through the Academy of Neurologic Music Therapy®.”

NMT is used to support speech, motor, and cognitive functions.



The NMT™ Treatment Process

- **Conduct a non-musical standardized assessment**
- **Set measurable non-music goals and objectives**
- **Translate these goals and objectives into music activities and create a treatment plan**
- **Implement treatment plan; document progress**
- **Repeat non-musical assessment**

Create new goals, or conclude treatment

<https://www.nmtacademy.co/>



Some NMT™ Techniques in Action

- **OMREX®** - **Oral Motor Respiratory Exercises**
- **MIT®** - **Melodic Intonation Therapy**
- **TIMP®** - **Therapeutic Instrument Music Performance**
- **RAS®** - **Rhythmic Auditory Stimulation**
- **MACT®** - **Music Attention Control Training**
- **MEFT®** - **Music Executive Function Training**

Music Relaxation Techniques

- **Focused breathing**
- **Listening to favorite music**
- **Guided visualization with music**
- **Progressive muscle relaxation with music**
- **Singing**
- **Dancing or movement**
- **Drumming**
- **Playing instruments**

Resources

- *Listen, Sing, Dance Play: Bring Musical Moments into the Rhythms of Caregiving* by Rachelle Morgan, MT-BC. This is a great practical resource for anyone looking to use music in support of caregiving.
<https://soundscapingsource.com/listen-sing-dance-play/>
- American Music Therapy Association
<https://www.musictherapy.org/>
- Academy of Neurologic Music Therapy
<https://nmtacademy.co/>
- A Different Drum Music Therapy, LLC
<https://www.differentdrum.net/>

