



## **Music Therapy: Benefits of Group Music Interventions**

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Music Therapy is an effective mode of therapy for working on interpersonal & social goals by providing music therapy within a group setting. Board-Certified and licensed music therapists utilize the specific benefits of music interventions within a group to address these goals.

### **Music Therapy Groups:**

Music therapy is often very effective in a group setting. Making music within a group provides space for self-expression, group cooperation, and creativity.

Music therapists provide the tools, instruction, and structure to facilitate the creation of musical products for patients within the group. Music therapy groups have been shown to increase positive affect and self esteem through the self-actualization and creative engagement with interpersonal relationships. Examples of music therapy groups include drumming ensembles, Orff ensembles, bells choirs, multi-instrument groups, singing groups, and dancing groups.

### **Music Therapy Goals**

Peer-Reviewed, Evidence-based studies in music therapy have shown the following positive statistically significant effects on interpersonal, cognitive, & emotional skills when using music in a group or individual setting for young children, adolescents, & young adults with developmental delays.

- Increase of eye gaze & joint attention (LaGasse, 2014)
- Increase in attentional control/switching, selective attention (Pasiali, LaGasse, & Penn, 2014)
- Decrease in Motor Impulsivity (Rickson, 2006)
- Decrease of aggression/hostility (Montello & Coons, 1998)
- Facilitate process of self-expression & provide a “channel for transforming frustration, anger, anger, and aggression into experience of creativity and self-mastery” (Montello & Coons, 49, 1998)
- Improvement of peer acceptance by performing music within a group (Cassity, 1981)
- Improvement in recognition of emotional states (Brown, 2017).
- Increase in expressive language skills including phrase length, noun retrieval, and verbal imitation tasks (Krauss & Gallaway, 1982)

### **Music Therapy Techniques**

Music therapists use the following techniques to address the previously listed goals:

- Song-writing
- Lyric discussion
- Musical Improvisation
- Therapeutic Singing
- Instrument Play
- Learning of musical concepts
- Performance practice
- Relaxation Techniques
- Movement to Music
- Melodic Intonation
- Group musical games

## Adaptive Music Lessons

In addition to the benefits of group music therapy, children, adolescents, & adults may also benefit from individual adaptive music lessons. Research in neuroscience and brain imaging reveal that learning to play an instrument has the following positive affects:

- Increased Attention skills
- Increased fine motor skills
- Increased neuroplasticity of the brain
- Improvement in memory
- Increased activation of both sides of the brain  
(Bow, 2014).

## Music Therapy Treatment

Music therapists conduct an initial detailed evaluation that assesses the following areas of the group:

- Gross Motor Skills
- Fine Motor Skills
- Oral Motor Skills
- Cognitive Skills
- Social Skills
- Sensory Processing
- Emotional Regulation
- Receptive Communication
- Expressive Communication
- Musicality

Based on the initial evaluation, the therapist creates functional, 6-month group goals in a Plan of Care. The MT addresses these goals through intentional music therapy interventions. The therapist keeps therapy notes after each session, and a reassessment is conducted every 6 months to measure progress and ensure continued growth.

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