

# the Evidence behind using Music Therapy with Seniors in Care

## Music therapy provides opportunities for:

- 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

## Research Highlights

- Music therapy reduces depression among older adults.
- Music experiences can be structured to enhance social/emotional skills, to assist in recall and language skills and to decrease problem behaviors.
- Music tasks can be used to assess cognitive ability in people with Alzheimer's Disease.
- Music is effective in decreasing the frequency of agitated and aggressive behaviors for individuals diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease and related dementias. Individuals in the late stages of dementia respond to and interact with music.

**A therapist may be able to use music to help some patients fight depression and improve, restore and maintain their health.** Three studies focused on adults aged 60 and older; one study looked at adults between ages 21 and 65; and one focused on 14- and 15-year-old adolescents. Although the studies did not show a definitive cause-and-effect relationship between music therapy and clinical improvement in depression, the authors found a positive correlation. Journal reference: Maratos AS, et al. Music therapy for depression (Review). Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2008, Issue 1.

**Listening to music can reduce chronic pain by up to 21 per cent and depression by up to 25 per cent. It can also make people feel more in control of their pain and less disabled by their condition.** Researchers carried out a controlled clinical trial with sixty people, dividing them into two music groups and a control group. They found that people who listened to music for an hour every day for a week reported improved physical and psychological symptoms compared to the control group. The participants, who had an average age of 50, were recruited from pain and chiropractic clinics in Ohio, USA. They had been suffering from a range of painful conditions, including osteoarthritis, disc problems and rheumatoid arthritis, for an average of six and a half years. Effect of music on power, pain, depression and disability. Sandra L Siedlecki, Cleveland Clinic Foundation, Ohio, and Marion Good, Case Western University, Ohio. Journal of Advanced Nursing. Volume 54.5, pages 553 to 562.

To learn more about music therapy contact JB Music Therapy 403.240.3877 or  
[www.jbmusic.ca](http://www.jbmusic.ca) - music therapy workshops available

# References

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