

## What parents say about music therapy

*The fact that my children are able to practice skills in a positive and fun environment, which bolsters their self-confidence, is priceless and appreciated.*

*When my son was working on social greetings, his music therapist used a song about learning to say 'hello.' We were walking around the block singing this song, when he greeted neighbors with a smile and a friendly 'hi!' I knew this social greeting would not have happened without practicing it first using music.*

*My 28-year-old son has used a variety of musical interventions, including music therapy, since he was a toddler. When we incorporate music as one of the strategies to reach a goal, we have seen increased language development, new skills, decreased anxiety, and more appropriate behavior in a group setting...all with huge smiles, pride in achievement and pure joy!*

*My son could sing before he could talk. Music therapy opened his communication skills and helped him to understand his world. As a teenager, with the help of his music therapist, he was able to sing God Bless America in front of 3000 people at a professional hockey game.*



## Music Therapy...

... is the clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish individualized goals within a therapeutic relationship by a credentialed professional who has completed an approved music therapy program (AMTA,2005).

## Music therapists...

- ✓ recognize that music has a positive impact on learning and development.
- ✓ use interventions that are developmentally appropriate and can be embedded in daily routines.
- ✓ collaborate with families, staff, and caregivers to individualize music therapy experiences that facilitate growth and promote generalization of communication, cognitive functioning, social, and motor skills across all environments.
- ✓ provide opportunities for music-making that promote self-expression, build confidence, and encourage social interaction.
- ✓ support the learning style of individuals with ASD by providing a structure that is familiar, consistent, and predictable.
- ✓ facilitate public events that are inclusive of all individuals on the autism spectrum.
- ✓ are board certified by the Certification Board for Music Therapists ([www.cbmt.org](http://www.cbmt.org)).
- ✓ can be found on the AMTA online directory at [www.musictherapy.org](http://www.musictherapy.org).

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# MUSIC THERAPY and PERSONS with AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER



## This is What We Know

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neuro-developmental disorder characterized by deficits in social communication, social interaction and restricted repetitive patterns of behavior, interests or activities (DSM-5).

Music therapy has been identified as an emerging intervention by the National Autism Center (2015). Music therapists incorporate many ASD evidence-based practices in their sessions (Kern, Rivera, Chandler, & Humpal, 2013).

Music therapy has been used to:

- ✓ improve communication, interpersonal skills, personal responsibility and play (Whipple, 2012).
- ✓ assist individuals with ASD to identify and express emotions (Katagiri, 2009), elicit joint attention (Kalas, 2012) and enhance auditory processing, sensory-motor, perceptual motor or gross/fine motor skills (LaGasse & Hardy, 2013).
- ✓ improve social engagement in the home environment and in the community (Thompson, McFerran, & Gold, 2013).
- ✓ musically adapt social stories to modify target behaviors and teach new skills (Brownell, 2002).



A full list of references can be found on the MT and ASD Fact Sheet at: [www.musictherapy.org/assets/1/71/MT\\_Autism\\_2014.pdf](http://www.musictherapy.org/assets/1/71/MT_Autism_2014.pdf)

## This is What We Do

*Music therapists work in partnership with clients, service providers, and caregivers to provide services based on clients' abilities, preferences, and needs as well as family values, beliefs, and priorities. Music therapy interventions may focus on:*

- ✓ increasing communication skills
- ✓ improving social skills
- ✓ emotional skills; confidence, independence
- ✓ providing motor/sensory experiences
- ✓ reinforcing academic/cognitive functioning
- ✓ music skill development
- ✓ promoting full inclusion in public music performances

*The music therapy intervention plan is based on assessment outcomes that target specific goals and integrates a variety of ASD-specific evidence-based strategies that may include:*

- ✓ prompting
- ✓ joint attention intervention
- ✓ reinforcement
- ✓ picture schedules

*Music therapy techniques may include:*

- ✓ singing/vocalizations
- ✓ instrument play
- ✓ movement/dance
- ✓ music improvisation
- ✓ songwriting/composition
- ✓ music listening
- ✓ computer-based music activities
- ✓ adapted instruction

*Music therapy may be used with a variety of treatment approaches such as:*

- ✓ Applied Behavioral Analysis
- ✓ Neurologic Music Therapy (NMT)
- ✓ Nordoff Robbins Music Therapy (NRMT)
- ✓ DIR@Floortime Model

## This is Where We Work

*Music therapists accept referrals and provide assessments and interventions to individuals with ASD in both 1:1 and group settings in:*

- ✓ public and private schools
- ✓ families' homes
- ✓ private practice settings
- ✓ preschools/daycare
- ✓ music therapy agencies
- ✓ early intervention programs
- ✓ treatment centers
- ✓ support groups
- ✓ hospitals
- ✓ various venues within the community

*The role of the music therapist may be as a(n):*

- ✓ provider of direct services
- ✓ member of an interdisciplinary team
- ✓ coach to parents
- ✓ consultant to family members/caregivers, educators, or team members
- ✓ an advocate for neurodiversity, promoting full access to music experiences in the community

*Music therapy services may be funded through:*

- ✓ Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B & Part C
- ✓ state, foundation or community grants
- ✓ Medicaid waiver (depending upon state of residence)
- ✓ select private insurance (with pre-approval)
- ✓ private payment

