



## Music Therapy in Pediatric Medical Care

### WHAT IS PEDIATRIC MUSIC THERAPY?

Children in pediatric hospital settings may have a multitude of different medical reasons for hospitalization, ranging from short-term treatment for an infection or injury, to long-term treatment for cancer or a brain injury, to intermittent treatment through their lifetime for chronic illness. However, despite their medical differences, children in the same developmental stage may experience common psychosocial challenges of hospitalization.

"Pediatric medical music therapy is the use of music and the therapeutic relationship to promote healthy coping and safeguard the child's psychosocial well-being during inpatient and outpatient medical treatment" (Ghetti, 2012). It is an evidenced-based and cost-effective service that has the ability to reach unique outcomes and increase patient satisfaction scores.

### COMMON INTERVENTIONS

- Active music engagement (AME)
- Music-assisted relaxation
- Music-alternate engagement
- Music listening
- Music-facilitated dramatic play
- Therapeutic singing
- Therapeutic music instruction
- Songwriting
- Recording projects

### COMMON GOALS UTILIZED

- Decreased pain perception
- Developmental support
- Reduction of anxiety
- Emotional expression/processing
- Development of positive coping skills
- Increased opportunities for social interaction
- Increased sensory stimulation
- Procedural support
- Bereavement support
- Legacy building
- Normalization of the hospital environment

### BENEFITS OF MUSIC THERAPY

#### *Improved Physiologic Outcomes*

Music therapy support has shown to have positive impact on a patient's physiologic state with outcomes such as: reduced pain perception, decreased cortisol levels, lowered heart rate, blood pressure & respiration rate (Bonilha, Onofre, Vieira, Prado, & Martinez, 2009; Irons, Kenny, McElrea, & Chang, 2012; Khalfa, Bella, Roy, Peretz, & Lupien, 2003; Leanderson & Sundberg, 1988).

#### *Increased Patient & Family Satisfaction Scores*

On average, patients who receive music therapy services during hospital admissions reported overall satisfaction scores that were 3.4 points higher than patients who did not receive music therapy on the Press Ganey Inpatient Survey (Yinger & Standley, 2011).

#### *Institutional Savings*

Results of music therapy-assisted procedures indicate reduction or elimination of patient sedation, reduction in procedural times, and decreased numbers of staff members needed for procedures, saving an average of almost \$75 per patient per procedure (Walworth, 2005).



## Increased Psychosocial Support

Patients undergoing medical treatment are at increased risk for poor psychosocial health. Music therapists reduce this risk by providing high-quality and individualized care alongside the child's treatment team. Research substantiates that music therapy reduces anxiety and stress related behaviors, increases coping-related behaviors and improved quality of life and family relationships during hospitalization. As a result, patients demonstrate fewer behavioral disturbances during medical encounters, accelerating healing and reducing trauma. (Colwell, Edwards, Hernandez, & Brees, 2013; Barry, O'Callaghan, Wheeler, & Grocke, 2010).

## CONTRAINDICATIONS

- ◆ Often paralytics are considered contraindicative due to the side effect of heightened auditory perception
- ◆ Additional assessment and care should be taken when providing patients experiencing ICU induced psychosis to support grounding in reality.

## CURRENT STATE

- ◆ Pediatric music therapists are found in over 250 pediatric facilities and units across America. (Knott. Et. al. 2020)
- ◆ Current benchmarking efforts recommend minimum 1 music therapist for every 100 beds. (Knott. Et. al. 2020)
- ◆ All of the US News World Report's Best Children's Hospital have established music therapy programs.

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## **What is AMTA?**

The American Music Therapy Association (AMTA) represents 10,000 music therapists, corporate members, and related associations worldwide. AMTA is committed to the advancement of education, training, professional standards, and research in support of the music therapy profession. AMTA establishes criteria for the education and clinical training of music therapists. Professional members of AMTA adhere to a Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice in the delivery of music therapy services. AMTA's mission is to advance public knowledge of music therapy benefits and increase access to quality music therapy services. Learn more at [www.musictherapy.org](http://www.musictherapy.org).