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Of Sound Mind And Body - Does Music Therapy Work?

By Stephen White

Music therapy assists in overcoming issues that are emotional, physical, social, and cognitive. This amazing type of therapy also manages stress, promotes overall wellness, helps in the expression of feelings, to reduce or eliminate pain, to improve memory, promotes rehabilitation from physical problems or disorders, and to better communication.

1. Who Can Do Music Therapy?

Music therapy is done through a music therapist. A music therapist first makes an assessment of the client's overall emotional and physical well-being. The music therapist also takes a look at the client's level of social functioning, cognitive skills, and communication abilities. After making these assessments, the music therapist designs individual music sessions for the client. Sessions can, of course, also include group music therapy. Music therapy options include listening to music, writing songs, discussing lyrics, performing music, and learning through music.

2. The Supporting Research

An integrated approach to music therapy has been shown to help children and adults of all ages. Music therapy helps those with developmental disabilities and learning disabilities overcome their learning obstacles. It also helps individuals with Alzheimer's disease and other age-related conditions regain their memory. In addition, those who have coped with drug abuse or who have suffered from brain injuries can benefit from music therapy. People dealing with chronic or acute pain, including mothers giving birth, can also use music therapy to alleviate pain.

3. Hospitals Use Music Therapy

Music therapy is also sometimes used by hospitals to improve the mood of their patients or to counteract depression. They also use music to help encourage patients to move during physical therapy, or to calm patients that need to be sedated or who need to rest. Music therapy is also used in hospitals to decrease muscle tension and to help patients relax.

4. Schools Use Music Therapy

Schools even use music therapy to help children be more successful. For special education students, music therapy is sometimes included in the student's Individualized Education Plan, or IEP. Music therapy is sometimes used to help these children improve their communication skills or to strengthen their physical coordination, that helps them be more successful in general education classes.

5. Music Soothes The Savage Beast

In fact, the concept of music therapy has its roots in ancient times, but really gained attention after World War I and World War II. At these times, community musicians visited Veterans hospitals and played for veterans who were suffering from physical and emotional trauma brought on by the wars. The patients at these hospitals showed notable improvement from the music. As a result, the doctors and nurses requested that musicians be hired to come to the hospitals.

6. The Benefits Of Music Therapy

The positive effects of music therapy have been so well recognized that many insurance companies cover it as a form of medical treatment. Medicare and Medicaid cover it, as well, so long as it is prescribed by a physician and the patient shows improvement from the music therapy.