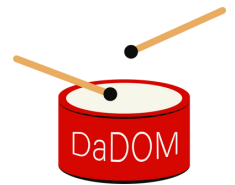


Lesson 6: Music therapists

DaDOM online teacher training



Music therapy

In this lesson, we introduce the students to the various professions that work alongside each other to deliver music in healthcare. Students will understand the role of the music therapist, how that differs from and complements their role as care workers, and understand the roles that professional musicians play in healthcare settings.



What is music therapy?

Music therapy is a specialized therapeutic practice where trained professionals use music and sound to achieve a wide range of social, psychological, and physical goals. This form of therapy is very effective in health care, where it is tailored to the individual needs of clients, often in collaboration with other healthcare or educational staff.

Role and function of a music therapist

Music therapists are certified professionals who strategically use music within therapeutic relationships to foster development, health, and well-being. They are skilled in designing music-based interventions that are safe and effective, tailored to meet individualized goals across a variety of treatment settings. These interventions can include creating music, singing, playing instruments, and listening to music, all aimed at addressing specific therapeutic goals such as enhancing emotional expression, stimulating cognitive functions, aiding physical rehabilitation, and facilitating social interactions.

Music therapists have specialized training to use music for therapy, focusing solely on music-based treatments. On the other hand, nurses might use music to make the environment more pleasant or to interact positively with patients. The nurses' use of music supports daily care but doesn't replace the specialized work of music therapists

Music therapists often work with nurses to provide deeper emotional and psychological support. In places like nursing homes, they use their skills to add an extra layer of care, especially for patients with challenges like dementia. Music therapy offers these patients ways to express themselves when they might struggle with words.

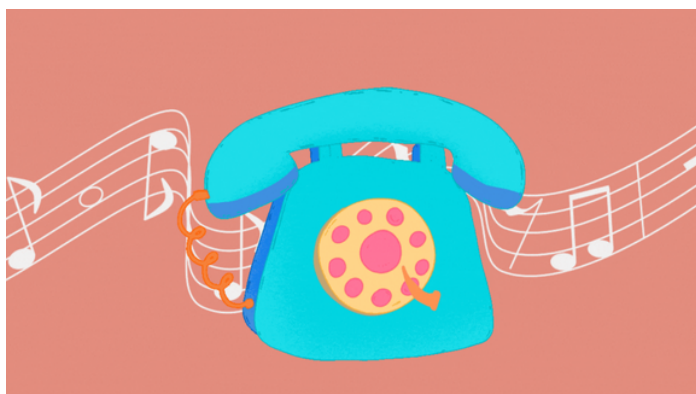
Examples of music therapy in the workplace:

- **Group sessions:** Activities like singing and playing instruments together can help many patients at once, focusing on social connections, emotional support, and physical movement.
- **Focused groups:** For specific needs, like helping people with Parkinson's improve their voice and breathing.
- **One-on-one sessions:** Tailored for individual needs, these sessions can help with reducing anxiety, feeling less isolated, or staying active.

When to call a music therapist?

Music therapy is useful when regular ways to motivate or engage patients aren't enough. It's great for patients who enjoy music and need something more tailored to their situation, like in advanced stages of dementia.

Music therapists set their goals by working with other healthcare professionals to make sure their music activities fit perfectly into the overall care plan. This teamwork helps ensure that every music session is beneficial and fits the patients overall care.



Musicians in the workplace

Visiting musicians occasionally grace healthcare settings, bringing with them a delightful enhancement to the everyday environment. These performers, whether solo artists or small groups, add a special touch—often seen as the 'cherry on top'—to the care landscape. Their live performances offer a festive break from the routine, uplifting the spirits of patients and staff alike.

While they operate independently, their music complements the efforts of healthcare professionals by infusing joy and a sense of celebration into the care setting. These engaging sessions not only entertain but also subtly support the broader goals of well-being and emotional engagement, making each visit a much-anticipated event.

Workplace application - When to call in a music therapist?

The goal is for students to identify and document real-life instances where music therapy could provide therapeutic benefits. Appropriate scenarios might include patients who:

- Exhibit anxiety, agitation, or symptoms of depression
- Have communication barriers, especially non-verbal patients
- Show signs of social withdrawal but have a known affinity for music or rhythm
- React positively to music during their care routines or recreational activities

Encourage students to think of a patient they have interacted with or learned about during their studies or internship. Ask them to compile their observations, and examine if they would benefit from a music therapist. Discuss the findings with the supervising nurse or a mentor.



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