

Music Therapy

MUSIC THERAPY IN REHABILITATION AND RECOVERY

Music Therapy is a specialist psycho-social intervention in which individual engagement through music is used to facilitate recovery from mental illness. The music therapist supports consumers in using music in ways which promote their health and well-being.

Why music in mental health?

Music has had a role in maintaining personal and social wellbeing throughout history. Music evolved as a form of social-emotional communication and impacts on our mood, level of arousal and cognition. The emotional power of music makes it an everyday resource with the potential to promote wellbeing and recovery. Music may provide an accessible form of self expression, helping to restore meaningful communication, previous skills and personality. The rich cultural and personal associations of music may assist in regaining a positive sense of self and cultural identity. Musical engagement becomes a way of voicing one's participation in the world and a means of giving voice to experiences silenced by mental illness and disability and societal reactions to these.

Music therapy is consumer-focussed:

- **uncovering individual consumer needs and potential, reclaiming previous skills and strengths, and exploring new areas of interest**
- **providing opportunities to exercise individual choice and personal power and to pursue activities that provide experiences of joy, meaning and purpose**
- **working collaboratively towards realistic consumer goals which provide motivation, hope and personal direction**
- **supporting self-management i.e. developing resources to manage stress, mood or energy levels, as well as social, recreational, educational and vocational skills**

Music therapy aims to provide linkages:

- **internal linkages** to emotions and memories seldom accessed, as well as to individual preferences, values, beliefs and aspirations
- **external linkages** to social networks and to community cultural participation, with musical interests providing bridges to active community involvement

Music therapy may include listening, playing, singing, song writing, improvising, performance or discussion, either on an individual or group basis. Services are provided in the least restrictive environment in order to maximise choice and opportunity. **The Elms Music Room** provides a positive, non-clinical focus on campus and programs also occur in wards and in community venues. Music therapy celebrates cultural diversity, social inclusion and creative expression.

Consumers, carers and volunteers are closely involved in planning, implementing and evaluating music therapy programs. As an innovative and creative approach to rehabilitation, music therapy includes ongoing service evaluation and development, keeping informed of international developments in the field and active involvement in research to promote **evidence-based practice**.

Registered Music Therapists have a minimum of four years university training in musicianship, psychology, research and other areas in order to meet the required professional competencies specified by the Australian Music Therapy Association.

For more information

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