



## A Plan For Senior Care's Guide To Enriching Music Therapy For Seniors



Music therapy is extremely beneficial to seniors, especially those with memory impairment or chronic illness. Music can bring joy, evoke memories, provide comfort and can improve quality of life. It has therapeutic benefits and can help with issues such as general stress, depression, chronic pain, and memory impairment. Music helps to release brain chemicals, such as Dopamine from the pleasure center of the brain. These chemicals are associated with good feelings, aiding to reduce depression, stress, pain, and agitation.

### **Stress Reduction & Increase in Relaxation**

Listening to music has been found to help people deal with stress and anxiety by slowing high heart rates and reducing levels of the stress hormone Cortisol. Songs with certain rhythms, themes, or lyrics help people relax and reduce stress. Music therapy has shown to help to reduce agitation.

### **Improve Speech and Cognitive Skills**

For dementia patients, music therapy is often used to slow the decline of speech skills. Music can inspire seniors who are nonverbal to communicate by singing or humming. Studies show that the memory of a song stays with the senior much longer than a regular memory. In a Stanford University study on the effects of music therapy on seniors found that rhythmic music stimulates certain areas of the brain to increase blood flow and improved seniors' performance on cognitive tests.

### **Increase Social Activity**

Traditionally, music is known to bring people together for an event or a holiday. In music therapy programs, older adults are encouraged to communicate with other members of their group to connect which can ease feelings of loneliness and prevent isolation.

### **Inspire movement**

Playing music can motivate seniors to get moving, whether it is by dancing, clapping, or even tapping their toes. Many music therapy programs use drums or tambourines to encourage seniors to participate and make their music.

### **Ideas For Music Therapy**

Take a class at a local senior center-watch a musical on TV-listen to choirs-make a playlist of favorite songs to play at home or in the car-attend concerts-take dance lessons-sing out loud-do sing karaoke-use instruments, like drums, handheld bells, create a sing-along-play religious or spiritual music-play music while doing art

**If your loved one is struggling at home to care for her/himself and you would like to explore senior care and housing options, please give us a call today. A Plan For Senior Care will be happy to create a personalized care plan for your loved one.**