



Music Therapy – The Unique Application of Music

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Article Information	Abstract
<p>Article history: <i>Received: 18.07.2012</i> <i>Revised: 20.09.2012</i> <i>Accepted: 10.10.2012</i></p>	<p>Music Therapy is a well-established allied health profession similar to occupational therapy and physical therapy, utilizing music as a tool to encourage development in social, emotional and perceptual motor areas. Music is, basically a means of communication. It is far more subtle than mere words. Music is effective because it is a non-verbal form of communication. Non-verbal communication often allows the expression of feelings and emotions which need to be expressed for the sake of health. Music is a successful medium because almost everyone responds positively to atleast some kind of music.</p> <p>Indian music is predominantly melodic in nature and the unique Raga System produces soft and sweet impressions in the minds of listeners. Music Therapy is a supportive technique to promote relaxation, to reduce pain, anxiety and stress and to dissipate loneliness. Music Therapy is effective on motor, affective and behavioural functions i.e. in patients with Parkinson's disease. Music Therapy is particularly useful with autistic children, and also effective in the development and remediation of speech and also helpful for handicapped children. It may also be used with deaf children to acquaint them with the world of vibrations. Music Therapy is of great value for blind children as a way to fill the void of their lives. It is in such cases that music allows an appropriate substitution, and this may help the child through a difficult period. Thus, it is important to know the hidden benefits of health in Music Therapy. It is necessary that intensive researches and experiments be encouraged in the field of Music Therapy.</p>
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1. INTRODUCTION:

Music Therapy is the unique application of music to enhance personal lives by creating positive changes in human behaviour. Music is effective because it touches each

person in a lot of different ways. Music is basically a means of communication.

It communicates about feelings in a way that words cannot, because of their inadequacy. It is a non-verbal form of

communication, is a natural reinforcer, is immediate in time and provides motivation for practicing non-musical skills. Non verbal communication often allows the expression of feelings and emotions which need to be expressed for the sake of health. Music is a successful medium because almost everyone responds positively to at least some kind of music.

The potentials of the ancient healing roots of different types of Indian music like Nada Yoga, Haveli Sangeet, Vedic Chanting and Raga Chikitsa have been recognized by various medical professionals, psychologists, musicologists and Music Therapists. It is the Indian genius that recognized that Ragas are not just mere commodities of entertainment, but the vibrations in their resonance could synchronize with one's mood and health. By stimulating the moods and controlling the brainwave patterns, Ragas could work as a complementary medicine. Playing, performing and even listening to appropriate Ragas can work as a medicine. Raga Therapy is effective for the most common illness of the modern times: stress and stress-related disorders. Some Ragas like Darbari Kanhada, Khamaj and Pooriya are said to help in diffusing mental tension. For those who suffer from hyper-tension, Ragas such as Ahirbhairav, Pooriya and Todi are prescribed. To control anger, Ragas like Malhara and Jaijivanti, and for blood pressure Raga Aasavari may be helpful. The Ragas create a consoling and transcending attitude of the mind, elevate the listener to an ethereal plane and purify the knots of the mind. They gratify the soul of the listeners and not just senses.

Music Therapy is not totally related with the treatment or cure of any disease, but it is an effective supportive technique to promote relaxation, to reduce anxiety, pain and stress and to dissipate loneliness. Pleasant music contributes to pain relief where the personal preference seems to be

an influential factor. The existence of Music Therapy as a belief system and the integrated approach in treatment of diseases advocated by medical professionals in the clinical arena has made them turn favourably towards music as a promising therapy.

The high impact of music on psyche and on mentally and emotionally disturbed is unchallenged. Music reception plays a crucial role within the dynamic of mental disorders. Music Therapy is effective on motor, affective and behavioural functions i.e. in patients with Parkinson's disease. The reception of music induces relaxation before and after surgery or diagnostic procedures, helping to save sedative drugs. Bailey discovered a significant improvement in mood when playing live music to cancer patients as opposed to playing taped music. Evidences suggest that long-term musical involvement reaps cognitive rewards in language skills, reasoning and creativity and boosts social adjustment. Music exercises the brain; playing an instrument for instance involves vision, hearing, touch, motor planning, emotion, symbol interpretation- all of which activate different brain systems. This may be why some Alzheimer's patients can perform music long after they have forgotten other things.

Music Therapy is particularly useful with autistic children. It allows children without language to communicate and possibly to orient themselves within time and space. Thaut found that children exhibiting autistic behaviour appear to prefer a musical stimulus rather than a visual stimulus when compared with normal children. The most important achievement of Music Therapists will be the establishment of proper relationship with the handicapped child. The handicapped quite often have difficulty in appropriate emotional response. It is in such cases that music allows an appropriate substitution,

and this may help the child through a difficult period, until he learns acceptable expression and appropriate responses.

Music therapy has also found to be effective in the development and remediation of speech. The severe deficit in communication observed among autistic children includes expressive speech which may be nonexistent or impersonal. It has been found that these children evidence unusual sensitivities to music. Music Therapy is used with deaf children chiefly to help acquaint them with the world of vibration. It may also be used to help them in developing the power of speech. Deaf children, by placing their hands on a piano case, can learn to distinguish various vibration rates. Probably the greatest value of music for the blind is that it provides a means for aesthetic expression and experience. These children have been deprived one basic avenue for aesthetic enjoyment and music can surely help to fill this void.

The positive feelings engendered by music will be of great value in the establishment of the most important function of the music therapist. The training of a Music Therapist involves a full curriculum of music classes along with selected courses in psychology, special education in anatomy with specific core courses and field experiences in music therapy.

Famous musician Dr M. Balmurti Krishnan devoted most of his life to music therapy. He has established a school named 'Vipanchi' in Chennai for providing music therapy. He keeps himself busy in treating diabetes, headache and blood pressure-like diseases through music therapy. By the help of different Ragas and 'synthetic sound capsule', he has treated patients by making them mentally balanced.

It is the urgent need of time to expose the hidden mysteries of health in music therapy. So, it is important that

researches and experiments should be encouraged to develop music therapy. Music Therapy may prove to be fruitful for our vastly populated country.

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