



Understanding Music Therapy

Music therapy is the planned use of music to assist with the healing and personal growth of people with identified emotional, intellectual, physical or social needs.”
(Music Therapy New Zealand)

Research has provided insight into how listening, playing, singing or moving to music can stimulate our brain, particularly the areas associated with movement, behaviour, emotion, touch, hearing, sight and balance. Music Therapists deliberately use music to promote physical, social and emotional wellbeing.

Music Therapists are musicians who are trained at post-graduate level to use music as a tool to assist people to achieve non-musical goals, like a physiotherapist uses exercise to improve a physical problem. These goals include: developing communication and social skills; memory and learning; improving confidence; reducing anxiety and depression; and encouraging physical movement.

Music Therapy is a creative process where the client is central. The process is what is important rather than the end musical product. No experience playing or read music is required for someone to benefit from music therapy. Live music is often used, as it is flexible and allows the Music Therapist adjust quickly in order to engage a client.

Registered Music Therapists work in a variety of settings with people of all ages and a wide range of needs. Therapy can be provided to individuals and in groups. Consultation can assist families and caregivers to effectively use music and silence.

