Music Therapy in Substance Abuse Treatment:
Evidence-Based Practice Support

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Description: Music Therapy is the clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish individualized goals within a therapeutic relationship by a credentialed professional who has completed an approved music therapy program. The aim of music therapy is to provide individuals in substance abuse treatment the opportunity to address the physical, cognitive, emotional and spiritual aspects of recovery. In the early stages of recovery, music therapy interventions are used to help those in recovery: 1) manage symptoms of withdrawal, 2) develop new coping skills; 3) discover and explore thoughts and feelings underlying addiction; and 4) improve relationships with others. As recovery progresses, interventions focus on the emotional and spiritual aspects of recovery. Music therapists employ such techniques as songwriting, improvisation, song discussion, participatory music groups and music and imagery to address these goal areas. Music therapy is provided in both individual and group settings.

STANDARDIZATION: Music therapy goals, objectives and progress are documented in a treatment plan and delivered in accordance with the AMTA Standards of Clinical Practice. Music selections and certain active music-making activities are modified for client preferences and individualized needs (i.e., song selection and music may vary).

REPLICATION: Yes; has also been used with different providers and populations.

MEANINGFUL OUTCOMES: Global state, mental state, anxiety management, social and emotional functioning

SPECIFIC OUTCOMES:
- Reduced muscle tension
- Decreased anxiety/agitation
- Enhanced interpersonal relationships
- Increased motivation
- Promote self-expression and self-awareness
- Improved self-image/increased self-esteem
- Increased verbalization
- Improved group cohesiveness
- Improve perception & differentiation of feelings
OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH

ADOLESCENTS


**Conclusions:** A significant correlation between psychiatric diagnoses and music preference and diagnosis and drug preference was found. This may support the idea that adolescents may use drugs and music for similar purposes.


**Conclusions:** Lyric analysis focusing on values’ clarification was shown to be an effective intervention for influencing an adolescent’s perceived locus of control, and helping to develop a positive attitude towards self and recovery.

ADULTS


**Conclusions:** Residents of the therapeutic community reported that lyric analysis and song sharing facilitated the expression of thoughts and feelings. Additionally, residents who listened to relaxing music before bedtime fell asleep quicker and reported improved mood on the following day.


**Conclusions:** Each of the three music therapy interventions were equally effective in decreasing depression, stress, anxiety and anger in females who were in substance abuse treatment.


**Conclusions:** Couples who received both rehabilitation and music therapy significantly lowered scores on the Psychosocial Problem Inventory. Additionally, song discussions significantly improve the outcome measurement of loneliness in women.

Conclusions: Patients who received 10 group guided imagery through music sessions experienced a significant decrease in state anxiety as compared to the patients in the control group.


Conclusions: Song writing and lyric analysis were shown to significantly increasing feelings of acceptance and joy/happiness/enjoyment and significantly decrease feelings of guilty/regretful/blame and fear/distrust. Seventy-five percent of participants cited music therapy as a significant tool in their recovery.


Conclusions: Patients who attended more than 6 music therapy sessions had a significantly longer duration of treatment than those who attended 3-6 sessions. Music therapy group attendance during in-patient treatment was predictive of successful follow-up to the initial after-care appointment.


Conclusions: Patients in substance abuse treatment reported music therapy to be highly effective in increasing relaxation, and energy level and decreasing impulsiveness.


Conclusions: Women inmates participating in music therapy group were on task significantly longer than those in the non-music therapy group.


Conclusions: Drumming and drum circles can provide a complementary role to addiction treatment. Positive effects of drumming include increased sense of relaxation, restoration of the balance in the opioid and serotonergic neurotransmitter system, positive spiritual experiences, interpersonal support and connection to others.