

# MUSIC THERAPY ROCKS AT HSC

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Music is a natural part of childhood and it is a means of expression and identity for the adolescent population. Music is able to access all levels of health (physical, mental, emotional and spiritual) simultaneously. Furthermore, the use of music is painless, non-invasive, portable and accessible. Because of this, Music Therapy has become an important therapeutic tool in healthcare.

The Music Therapy Program began in January 1998 at Health Science Centre, where a trained music therapist designed and implemented the program. For the past 15 years, the program has continued to run through the Child Life Department at Children's Hospital on annual donations and grants through the Children's Hospital Foundation.



Within a medical setting, music therapy services can be made available in order to offset any adverse reactions of hospitalization. The program strives to offer and provide a complementary, nonpharmacological form of pain management within a hospital setting in addition to enhancing psychosocial care through the exploration of music as a positive coping mechanism.

**Music Therapy** is the therapeutic use of music to restore, maintain and improve mental, physical and emotional health. Through songs, instruments and music activities, the trained music therapist strives to:

- reduce anxiety
- provide opportunity for normalcy
- facilitate relaxation
- offer success-oriented opportunities for creativity and self-expression
- reduce perception of pain (music as an

- audioanalgesic)
- motivate and encourage activity
- provide avenues for coping
- increase sense of control
- encourage communication and socialization
- ease adjustment to hospitalization

## Description

At Health Science Centre, Music therapy services are provided to pediatric patients and their families in the following areas at Children's Hospital: all inpatient units (CK3, CH4, CK5, CH5); Pediatric Special Care Unit (PSCU); Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU); Child and Adolescent Mental Health Units (PY1 South and North); Bone Marrow Transplant Unit; Pediatric Hemodialysis Unit; Cancer Care Outpatient Clinic (bi-weekly); Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (consult basis); and the Child Life Main Playroom and Closed-Circuit Television Station.

The Music Therapy Program is provided through the Child Life Department as the goals of the program interfaces seamlessly with the goals of the department. Child Life Specialists and other health care team members refer patients of all ages for music therapy services.

A variety of activities are offered to address individual needs. Activities include: singing new and familiar songs; musical improvisation (vocal/instrumental); instrumental playing; active/passive listening; songwriting; movement to music; creative art experiences combined with music; musical games; and a choice of compact discs and tapes.

Similar to other allied health professionals such as an occupational therapist, physiotherapist and speech therapist, a music therapist is trained to assess the client, devise a treatment plan consisting of goals and objectives that can be measured and evaluate treatment. Music therapy services often complement other professional services, which allow the child to work on certain goals in a way that may be less threatening to them and therefore increases his/her ability to attain the therapeutic goals.

## Program Objectives

The Music Therapy Program objectives are as follows:

- Provide music as a means of expression and coping

to children, adolescents and their families regardless of age, disability or cultural background.

- Provide music to aid in pain management.
- Promote normal, age appropriate play and exploration through music.
- Provide a nonverbal means of communication and self-expression.
- Provide success-oriented activities to promote self-esteem.
- Provide choices to increase sense of control.
- Reduce anxiety and promote relaxation.
- Promote and maintain age appropriate development.
- Facilitate verbal communication of their experience.
- Follow and adhere to the Principles of Family-Centred Care.



### **Professional and Personal Skills Required of Music Therapists**

A Music Therapist is professionally trained to utilize clinical musical interventions to address behavioral/ psychosocial/emotional, communication/language, sensory-motor, & cognitive needs of individuals. She needs to be a competent musician who is both creative and resourceful, and well-versed in a variety of music therapy applications and research.

Music therapists must also conduct themselves according to a code of professional ethics as established by the Canadian Association for Music Therapy.

They need to create a therapeutic environment and engage in the therapeutic process while being an effective communicator with clients, other team members, and the public.

Spontaneity, energetic purpose, flexibility, and humour are other important attributes!

### **Music Therapy Training in Canada**

A Music Therapist is a graduate of an approved degree program, offered at five post-secondary schools in Canada:

- Acadia University, (Wolfville, NS)
- Canadian Mennonite University (Winnipeg, MB) – established in 2005
- Capilano College (North Vancouver, BC)

- Concordia University (Montréal, PQ)
- Wilfrid Laurier University (Waterloo, ON) –Masters MT degree also offered

A Music Therapist is an accomplished musician who is able to play several instruments (usually including piano and guitar), sing, and improvise in a variety of styles. Detailed studies in music theory, harmony, conducting, music history, solo and ensemble playing, and composition form the solid basis for the therapist's musical knowledge and skill.

Professional music therapy training is a special combination of theoretical and experiential learning. Students gain knowledge of normal and abnormal human development; of symptoms, problems, and needs associated with people who have a variety of disabilities and illnesses; and of various treatment approaches and modalities. They are also trained in observation, assessment, treatment planning, implementation, and evaluation. Grounding in the theory, research, and practice of music therapy and psychology is necessary to provide individuals and groups with effective therapeutic services.



### **Accreditation**

A 1000-hour internship is completed after the four years of academic training. In order to meet the accreditation requirements of the Canadian Association for Music Therapy (CAMT), Music Therapists must also provide examples of their clinical documentation, be able to articulate the philosophy and model of music therapy in which they practice, and demonstrate an understanding of how to identify and resolve ethical issues in the workplace. Accredited members receive the designation of Music Therapy Accredited (MTA), and must fulfill continuing education requirements to retain their MTA status. In addition, the accredited Music Therapist must uphold the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice that are established by the Canadian Association for Music Therapy to be a member in good standing.

*For more information, the Canadian Association for Music Therapy can be found on the web at: <http://www.musictherapy.ca>.*