

Music therapy can be used to support people in medical settings who are hospitalized with acute, chronic, or life threatening illnesses. It can offer opportunities for relaxation, emotional support, alleviation of pain, as well as caregiver support. As every individual's medical experience can vary, music therapy intervention can be focused on their specific needs.

## Music therapy can utilize its unique approach to address:

- individualized goals tailored to what is beneficial for each person;
- needs in more than one area at the same time;
- individualized goals in both group and individual sessions;
- different levels of need for the individual at any given time;
- emotional issues that may not be expressed using words;
- emotional well-being and self-worth;
- the need for the caregiver to be supported;
- the need for socialization opportunities;
- the need to be able to express feelings;
- the need of self-expression to reflect on feelings and inner moods and emotions;
- the need to reduce pain and anxiety to improve quality of life;
- the need for relaxation; and
- the need to experience normality for both the patient and loved ones.

## How do music therapists use music these benefits?

- facilitating songwriting to express feelings, emotions, thoughts and reflections; -distracting from pain and other symptoms;
- developing coping skills;
- offering an alternative focus as a tool for support during procedures;
- encouraging and supporting relaxation;
- motivating movement and activity to help with recovery;
- analyzing lyrics of music to help clients express emotions and feelings;
- using client music choices to aid in reflecting emotions;
- exploring and expressing spirituality;
- creating music recordings of clients, such as heartbeat songs or songs written by the client, to create legacies following medical illness or loss of life;
- involving caregivers in music making or listening to support them as well as patients; and
- bringing joy and normalcy during a stressful or difficult time.

## What is the research behind using music therapy?

Many researchers perform meta or combined studies comparison reviews involving music therapy research in order to evaluate the efficacy of music therapy. The results of high-quality systematic reviews and meta-analyses are considered to be more definitive than individual studies in determining efficacy. Cochrane Reviews are considered by many to be the “Gold Standard”, or the authoritative word in the medical conversation on a particular topic.

### 2006 Meta-Analysis

In the Effects of Music and Music Therapy on Medical Patients: A Meta-Analysis of the Research and Implication for the Future, (Dileo, 2006) looked at the impact of music, as well as the difference in effect between music therapy and music medicine. “Music medicine is the use of passive listening (usually involving prerecorded music) as implemented by medical personnel” whereas music therapy is goal oriented and implemented by a board-certified music therapist.

Dileo found:

Outcome variables of subjects receiving music treatment (either music medicine or music therapy) were significantly better than those for control subjects [standard care] ....Moreover, music therapy interventions were found to have significantly greater effect sizes than music medicine interventions.

### 2016 Cochrane Review

In a Cochrane review (Bradt et al., 2016) looking at the effects of music therapy and music medicine interventions for psychological and physical outcomes in people with cancer, the authors concluded:

That music interventions may have beneficial effects on anxiety, pain, fatigue, and quality of life (QoL) in people with cancer. Furthermore, music may have a small positive effect on heart rate, respiratory rate and blood pressure. Reduction of anxiety, fatigue, and pain are important outcomes for people with cancer, as they have an impact on health and overall QoL. Therefore, we recommend considering the inclusion of music therapy and music medicine interventions in psychosocial cancer care.

### 2014 Cochrane Review

In a Cochrane review (Bradt & Dileo, 2014) which examined the impact of music intervention on mechanically ventilated patients, the authors stated:

Music listening may have a large anxiety-reducing effect on mechanically ventilated patients. The results furthermore suggest that music listening consistently reduces respiratory rate and systolic blood pressure, suggesting a relaxation response.

### **2013 Cochrane Review**

This Cochrane review (Bradt et al., 2013) examined the effects of music interventions on psychological and physiological responses in people with coronary heart disease. The authors stated that:

Listening to music may have a beneficial effect on anxiety in persons with [coronary heart disease], especially those with a myocardial infarction. Anxiety reducing effects appear to be greatest when people are given a choice of which music to listen to.

Furthermore, listening to music may have a beneficial effect on systolic blood pressure, heart rate, respiratory rate, quality of sleep and pain in persons with [coronary heart disease]. However, the clinical significance of these findings is unclear.... More research is needed into the effects of music interventions offered by a trained music therapist.

### **2003 Meta-Analysis**

Standley & Whipple (2003) completed a meta-analysis looking at music's impact with pediatric patients receiving medical treatments. It was found that:

Music is significantly better than no music in pediatric medical treatment.

### **2017 Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis with Burn Patients**

In a review (Li et al., 2017) that looked at music as an intervention supporting dressing change, debridement, range of motion exercise, preoperative preparations, cold therapy, nursing care and isolation, the authors concluded:

Burn patients may experience cumulative benefits from music interventions in terms of decreased pain and anxiety, leading to better treatment prognosis. Music intervention has a positive effect on pain alleviation, anxiety reduction and heart rate control, which provided evidence to support the advantages of its use during burn treatment. Further high-quality studies with carefully considered music interventions are recommended to provide more solid evidence on both the short-term and long-term effects of this intervention strategy on burn patients.

## **How Does Music Therapy Compare to Other Approaches?**

Music therapy offers support for patients, as well as their families, while dealing with a medical experience. This can take place in an inpatient or outpatient setting, and can be individualized to focus on what the patient needs at the time of service. Support through music therapy can take place during procedures, at bedside, in a group setting, or during co-treatment alongside other disciplines, such as physical therapy or occupational therapy.

As interventions are tailored to what the patient needs, they can vary from offering relaxation, outlets for self-expression, decreasing the perception of pain, procedural support, and overall support in coping with a diagnosis or hospitalization. This support can also involve the family of the patient by engaging them in music improvisation, including them in a songwriting experience, or giving them the opportunity to see their loved one experiencing something outside of the day to day medical experiences.

As described by Robb (2003), “the [music] therapist modifies the environment so that patients experience increased opportunities to exercise their competence, autonomy, and relatedness with others while hospitalized. Robb is speaking specifically to work in a pediatric medical setting, but the concept applies to all medical patients, and music therapy’s ability to support the whole person. “Live music, emphasizing rhythm and collaborative elements of creative play within an entrained moment, can address a host of human behaviors including neurological, psychological, physical, and spiritual domains” (Mondanaro et al, 2021).

Music is often a part of people’s daily lives, and may often be used independently of a music therapist. One such way this occurs is through music medicine. “Music medicine is the use of passive listening (usually involving prerecorded music) as implemented by medical personnel” (Dileo, 2006). Many of the meta-analysis and systematic reviews look at the use of both music medicine and music therapy. Dileo (2006) found that “music therapy interventions were found to have significantly greater effect sizes than music medicine interventions.” Additional research further supported the need for music therapists, as noted in Rosetti et al. (2017) “[Music Therapy], provided by a board-certified music therapist, may offer a safe, cost-effective means of alleviating patient anxiety and distress.” And Standley and Whipple (2003) added that “The presence of the music therapist allows for skillful intervention with ongoing adaptation to the emerging situation.”

### What do people say about music therapy?

Ugglä et al. (2019) looked at the experiences of pediatric patients and their parents experiences during a music therapy intervention. Collaborative research interviews were used to gather data. The research found that “music therapy developed into a significant and helpful experience, an important ingredient in coping with and managing the treatment period at the hospital.” Additionally, “the participants described having felt happy, recognized, emotionally moved, energized, and connected to longing and liveliness in the interactive process”.

Yates et al. (2018) also looked into the caregiver perception of music therapy. This study examined the caregivers' experiences and perceptions of music therapy for their children during bone marrow transplant hospitalizations. Semi-structured phone interviews led to four themes that emerged:

(1) music therapy motivated patients to physically engage their bodies despite symptoms; (2) music therapy elevated patients' mood; (3) caregivers benefited from seeing their child engaged in music therapy; and (4) caregivers were appreciative for the opportunity and requested additional music therapy services.

Lynch et al. (2021) investigated the adult patient perspective. The patient experiences of active and passive music therapy were explored through semi-structured interviews. A retrospective analysis was then completed. The authors found:

Recipients of active [music therapy] emphasized the session's interactive elements, finding the sessions stimulating by providing opportunities for joyous social interaction not centered on the diagnosis. Passive [music therapy] recipients focused on the calming therapeutic effect of the session, easing anxieties through focus and reflection on the music itself.

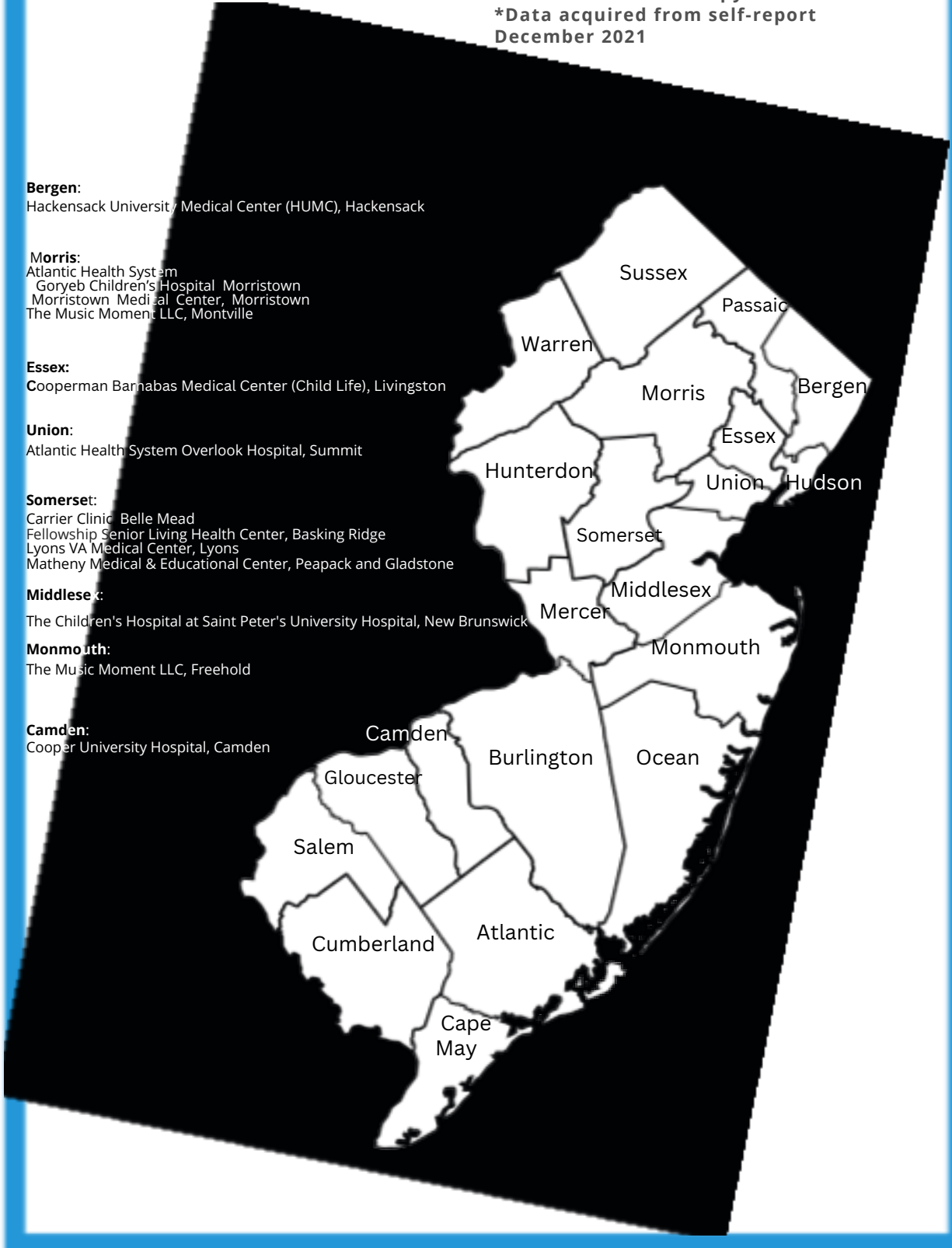
Additional quotes from participants:

So if I lie back and close my eyes, it just takes me away from all the pain and suffering I'm going through, and so to listen to her [the music therapist], it's very soothing.

You know you can talk to her [the music therapist]. About things in general, things that are going on in your life, things like that [...] So in between music it's communicating, you know, and I can see her reaction and things like that. You know, you don't get there anywhere else [at the hospital].

## Finding a Music Therapist In NJ

Institutions, facilities and businesses  
that offer music therapy services  
\*Data acquired from self-report  
December 2021



**Bergen:**  
Hackensack University Medical Center (HUMC), Hackensack

**Morris:**  
Atlantic Health System  
Goryeb Children's Hospital, Morristown  
Morristown Medical Center, Morristown  
The Music Moment LLC, Montville

**Essex:**  
Cooperman Barnabas Medical Center (Child Life), Livingston

**Union:**  
Atlantic Health System Overlook Hospital, Summit

**Somerset:**  
Carrier Clinic, Belle Mead  
Fellowship Senior Living Health Center, Basking Ridge  
Lyons VA Medical Center, Lyons  
Matheny Medical & Educational Center, Peapack and Gladstone

**Middlesex:**  
The Children's Hospital at Saint Peter's University Hospital, New Brunswick

**Monmouth:**  
The Music Moment LLC, Freehold

**Camden:**  
Cooper University Hospital, Camden

## Finding a Music Therapist In NJ

Find a private practice music therapist on the NJ Association for Music Therapy (NJAMT)

Check a music therapist's MT-BC status on the CBMT website.

Note: you will need the music therapist's full name.

Find a music therapist AMTA on the national website.

### In New Jersey music therapy services may be funded through:

#### **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B & Part C**

#### **State, foundation or community grants**

#### **Medicaid waiver**

Although New Jersey does not offer Medicaid waivers for music therapy services, New Jersey has utilized state and county agency funds and population specific waivers (i.e., autism, developmental disabilities) to cover the provision of music therapy interventions in a variety of settings.

#### **Division of Developmental Disabilities (Health and Human Services) Requires pre-approval.**

As an adult, if you receive music therapy outside the home and you qualify for Medicaid, you may qualify to have the music therapist paid directly from the Division of Developmental Disabilities under the Supports Program. For children under age 21, DDD has proposed a pilot program to provide music therapy as an adjunct service.

#### **Select private Insurance (with pre-approval)**

Companies like Blue Cross Blue Shield, United Healthcare, Cigna, and Aetna have all paid for music therapy services at some time. Success has occurred on a case-by-case basis when the therapist implements steps within the reimbursement process and receives pre-approval for music therapy services.

#### **Private Payment**

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