

Mental health needs are individual and may be emotional, psychosocial, affective, cognitive, communicative, and behavioral. It is not uncommon that someone may experience needs in more than one area and treatment cannot be generalized.

## 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;
- the need to be able to express feelings;
- the need to build supportive and healthy relationships;
- the need to reconnect with others;
- the need to stay in reality, the here and now; and
- the need for coping skills that extend beyond therapy to everyday life.

## How do music therapists use music to achieve these benefits?

- evoking all the senses in a multi-modal approach;
- addressing behavioral needs, by providing reassurance, and maintaining structure, due to the inherent order of music;
- aiding communication both verbal and non-verbal;
- engaging and bringing focus to the here and now;
- connecting to feelings and memories through music that has meaning to the individual;
- gaining personal insights, coping and problem solving strategies through lyric analysis;
- sharing experiences in music for socialization;
- facilitating songwriting and improvisation as a means for self-expression and/or self-advocacy;
- facilitating self-expression through songs with special meaning for the individual;
- motivating participation and interactions when verbal approaches have failed;
- creating music together to encourage risk-taking and breaking cycles;
- creating opportunities for relaxation and relief from anxiety through distraction;
- maintaining focus through choices of music;
- stabilizing emotions with music structure and choices; and
- adapting to whichever methodology is best for the client, thus truly making music therapy an encompassing approach.

## What is the research behind using music therapy?

Researchers and several organizations 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.

### 2022 Cochrane Review Update

This Cochrane review (Ghetti, undated; but published in May 2022), aimed to assess effects for people with substance use disorders, if music therapy was given in addition to standard care and included 21 studies with 1984 people. Authors’ conclusions:

Results from this review suggest that music therapy as 'add on' treatment to standard care can lead to moderate reductions in substance craving and can increase motivation for treatment/change for people with substance use disorders receiving treatment in detoxification and short-term rehabilitation settings. Greater reduction in craving is associated with music therapy lasting longer than a single session. We have moderate- to-low confidence in our findings as the included studies were downgraded in certainty due to imprecision, and most included studies were conducted by the same researcher in the same detoxification unit, which considerably impacts the transferability of findings.

### 2019 Cochrane Review

In a Cochrane Review Summary (Roddis & Tanner, 2019) published in Research in Nursing the authors wrote:

The review demonstrated that a significant, short-term improvement in depressive symptoms, level of functioning and anxiety can be seen in individuals undertaking music therapy together with usual treatment when compared with a group undergoing treatment as usual. There is no significant difference in depressive symptoms between individuals undertaking music therapy when compared with psychological therapy. The number of adverse events for those having music therapy alongside their usual treatment was not significantly different from those only having treatment as usual.”

### 2017 Cochrane Review

In a Cochrane review (Geretsegger et al., 2017) comprising 18 studies and 1215 participants the authors found:

“Moderate- to low-quality evidence suggests that music therapy as an addition to standard care improves the global state, mental state (including negative and general symptoms), social functioning, and quality of life of people with schizophrenia or schizophrenia-like disorders. However, effects were inconsistent across studies and depended on the number of music therapy sessions as well as the quality of the music therapy provided. Further research should especially address the long-term effects of music therapy, dose-response relationships, as well as the relevance of outcome measures in relation to music therapy.”

### **2017 Cochrane Review**

In a Cochrane review (Aalbers et al., 2017) comprising 9 studies and 411 participants the authors concluded:

“Findings of the present meta-analysis indicate that music therapy provides short-term beneficial effects for people with depression. Music therapy added to treatment as usual (TAU) seems to improve depressive symptoms compared with TAU alone. Additionally, music therapy plus TAU is not associated with more or fewer adverse events than TAU alone. Music therapy also shows efficacy in decreasing anxiety levels and improving functioning of depressed individuals.”

### **2014 National Center for Biotechnology (NCBI) - National Institutes of Health (NIH) Summary of Systematic Reviews**

In a summary of systematic reviews (SRs) (Kamioka et al., 2014) to determine the effectiveness of music therapy (MT) including mental disorders the authors concluded:

“This comprehensive summary of SRs demonstrates that MT treatment improved the following: global and social functioning in schizophrenia and/or serious mental disorders, gait and related activities in Parkinson’s disease, depressive symptoms, and sleep quality. MT may have the potential for improving other diseases, but there is not enough evidence at present. Most importantly, a specific adverse effect or harmful phenomenon did not occur in any of the studies, and MT was well tolerated by almost all patients.”

## How Does Music Therapy Compare to Other Approaches?

Music therapy is a safe treatment intervention of connection; a social opportunity to reduce isolation and relate to others' experiences; a path to better understanding self, thoughts, feelings and struggles. Music therapists build upon the participant's strengths and current abilities rather than focusing on symptoms, and they facilitate both verbal and non-verbal expressions through music interactions in a way that doesn't require any music background on the part of the participant.

Music therapy addresses typical areas of need in mental health such as engaging in reality orientation, maintaining focus, and gaining personal insights while developing positive coping strategies and problem-solving skills. This may be done through a variety of active music making such as songwriting and improvisation, or music experiences such as music listening and lyric analysis. Music therapy combined with standard treatment for individuals diagnosed with schizophrenia has been shown to significantly improve total symptoms, negative symptoms, depression symptoms, and improve quality of life over just the standard treatment (Jia et al., 2020). Music therapy also helps with cognitive functions such as verbal fluency, and attention; negative symptoms of emotional withdrawal and blunted affect; and psychiatric symptoms of mannerisms and posturing, hostility, bizarre behavior and disorientation (Kosugi et al., 2019).

Songwriting in music therapy is widely used for individuals experiencing PTSD. Music therapy programs for veterans such as Songwriting with Soldiers or Operation Song have been very successful in helping individuals experience catharsis. Songwriting is effective in helping patients in mental health facilities develop coping skills (Silverman, 2011) and for individuals who have experienced trauma. Adolescents find this to be especially helpful as a means to express and examine their thoughts, rather than a purely verbal approach.

Music therapy is often included in the care of children with mental health disorders. In a study of 352 children aged 12-21 years, it was found that after music therapy, there was a self-reported change in mood across age, gender and diagnoses most often (Schuman et al., 2016). In a nine-month program for substance abuse, Spanish-speaking participants, both adolescents and adults, were found to be significantly less depressed when they participated in improvisational music therapy along with the standard treatment compared to those who just received the standard treatment (Albornoz, 2011).

## What do people say about music therapy?

In a study of patients diagnosed with either Major Depressive Disorder or Acute Phase Schizophrenia Spectrum Disorder, the patients described their music therapy experiences as likeable, wonderful and impactful (Paul, Lotter & van Staden, 2020).

A nurse working in an acute psychiatric facility commented that a patient diagnosed as bipolar and in a manic episode, with extremely high blood pressure, had a lowered blood pressure for the first time since he had been admitted after a music therapy relaxation intervention was provided. (related by a music therapist)

Staff perceived positive benefits for patients who participated in alternative medicine, which included music therapy. Staff reported the greatest positive benefits were for individuals with eating disorders, where they observed improved coping skills, relaxation and stress relief (Kennedy et al., 2014).

Seventy-three patients in an intermediate care facility consistently ranked music therapy sessions as most relaxing, fun, motivating, and they rated music therapy higher for increasing communication, self-esteem, anger management, mood and self-expression when compared to other programs of coping skills, substance abuse, community reentry, medication/symptom management, recreation therapy and art (Silverman, 2006).

Participants in a therapeutic chorale for persons with chronic mental illness, described aspects of their lives that were positively affected as self-esteem, emotional expression, mood alteration, coping with stress, comfort level within while in the group, and being able to establish a regular routine (Eyre, 2011).

In a study (McCaffrey & Edwards, 2016) where music therapy mental health services were provided, patients described their experiences:

“When you get to do it you find that you are expressing yourself the way that you feel comfortable...”

“You can be yourself through an instrument or you can express yourself and it's really a very simple way of expressing...”

“...I can blend in with music and therapy.”

## Finding a Music Therapist In NJ

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

### Bergen:

Meals on Wheels of North Jersey, Westwood  
Ramapo Ridge Psychiatric Hospital, Wyckoff

### Morris:

Greystone Park Psychiatric Hospital, Morris Plains  
Portrait Health Centers, Parsippany

### Essex:

Clara Maass Medical Center, Belleville  
Essex County Hospital Center, Cedar Grove  
Inner Harmony Center for Hope and Healing, South Orange  
Rutgers University Correctional Healthcare, Northern State Prison, Newark (Forensic Correctional Mental Health 19 yrs+)  
RWJ Barnabas Newark Beth Israel, Mental Health Short Term Care, Newark  
Tempo! Music Therapy, Nutley (offers in-person and telehealth services)

### Hudson:

Enlightenment Music Therapy, Jersey City  
Meadowview Psychiatric Hospital, Secaucus

### Union:

Cornerstone Behavioral Health Hospital of Union County, Berkeley Heights  
Overlook Hospital (Adolescent & Young Adult Eating Disorders), Summit  
Summit Oaks Hospital, Summit

### Somerset:

Creative Flow Therapy, Hillsborough  
Fellowship Senior Living Health Center, Basking Ridge  
Hackensack Meridian Health Carrier Clinic Belle Mead  
Intensive Outpatient Program for Mental Health, Hope Street, Somerset  
Lyons VA Medical Center, Lyons  
RWJ University Hospital Somerset, Somerville

### Mercer:

Ann Klein Forensic Center, Trenton  
Capital Health Regional Medical Center, Trenton  
Neuroscapes, Mercer County  
Penn Medicine Princeton House Behavioral Health Inpatient/Outpatient,  
Princeton Trenton Psychiatric Hospital, Trenton

### Middlesex:

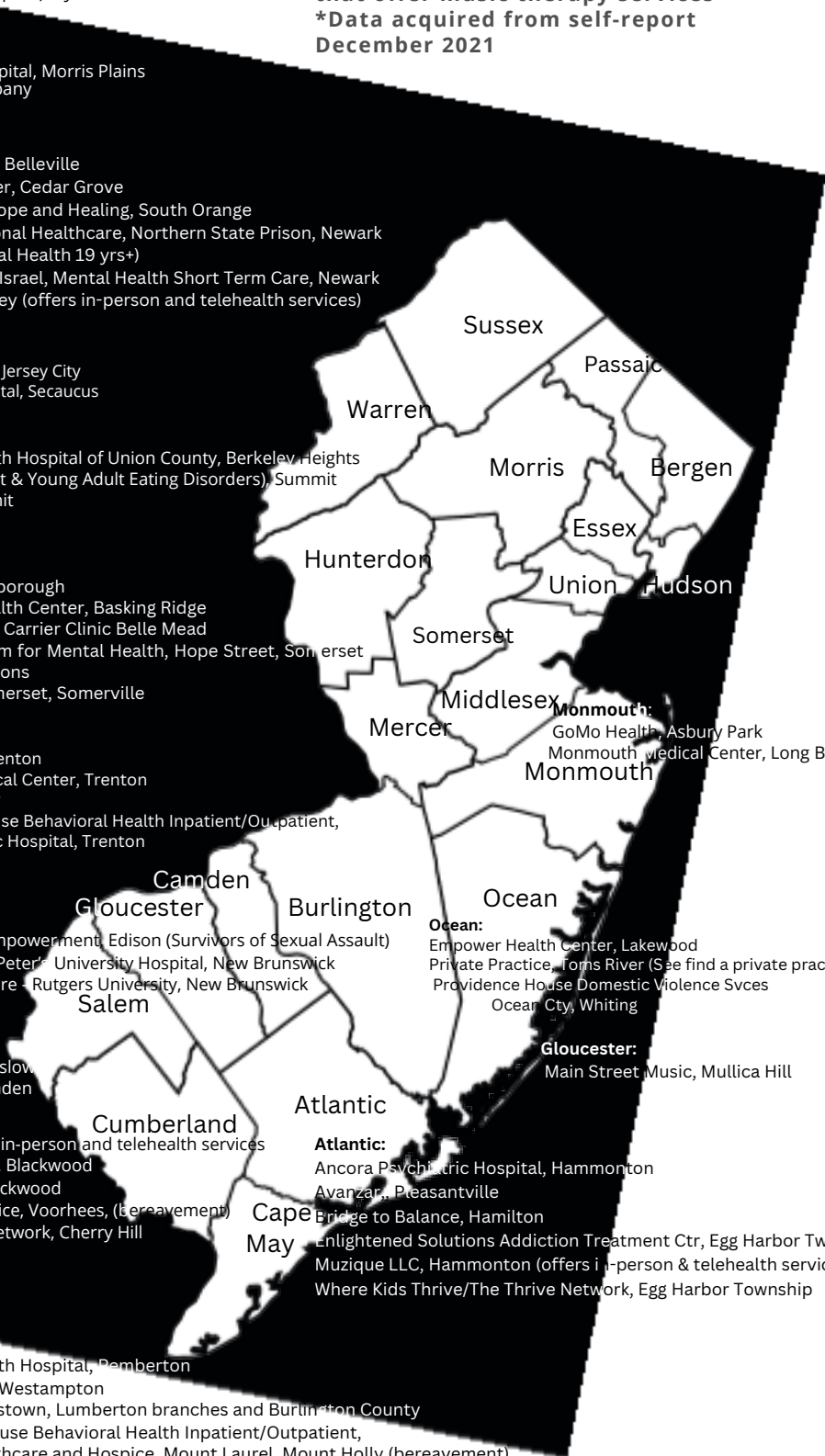
Middlesex County Center for Empowerment Edison (Survivors of Sexual Assault)  
The Children's Hospital at Saint Peter's University Hospital, New Brunswick  
University Correctional Healthcare - Rutgers University, New Brunswick

### Camden:

Ancora Psychiatric Hospital, Winslow  
Cooper University Hospital, Camden  
Divine Harmonies LLC, Oaklyn  
Muzique LLC, Barrington (offers in-person and telehealth services)  
Northbrook Behavioral Hospital, Blackwood  
Recovery At The Crossroads, Blackwood  
Samaritan Healthcare and Hospice, Voorhees, (bereavement)  
Where Kids Thrive/The Thrive Network, Cherry Hill

### Burlington:

Buttonwood Behavioral Health Hospital, Pemberton  
Hampton Behavioral Health, Westampton  
Oaks Integrated Care, Moorestown, Lumberton branches and Burlington County  
Penn Medicine Princeton House Behavioral Health Inpatient/Outpatient,  
Moorestown Samaritan Healthcare and Hospice, Mount Laurel, Mount Holly (bereavement)



Monmouth:  
GoMo Health, Asbury Park  
Monmouth Medical Center, Long Branch

### Ocean:

Empower Health Center, Lakewood  
Private Practice, Toms River (See find a private practice NJAMT)  
Providence House Domestic Violence Svces  
Ocean Cty, Whiting

### Gloucester:

Main Street Music, Mullica Hill

### Atlantic:

Ancora Psychiatric Hospital, Hammonton  
Avanza, Pleasantville  
Bridge to Balance, Hamilton  
Enlightened Solutions Addiction Treatment Ctr, Egg Harbor Twnshp  
Muzique LLC, Hammonton (offers in-person & telehealth services)  
Where Kids Thrive/The Thrive Network, Egg Harbor Township

## 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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