



Music Therapy in New Jersey

What is Music Therapy and Who Are New Jersey Music Therapists

What is Music Therapy?

The national American Music Therapy Association (AMTA) defines music therapy as 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.

In other words, music therapists use music in multiple ways based upon what the client needs at any given time while using methods that music therapy research has shown to be effective. Further, music therapists are healthcare professionals who have completed education and clinical training that meet standards established and required by AMTA and have also passed the exam for MT-BC, or Music Therapist- Board Certified, by the Certification Board for Music Therapists (CBMT).

What do Music Therapists do?

Music therapists assess client needs and plan treatment by identifying goals, objectives and potential strategies for music therapy interventions that are appropriate for the client.

There are many methods a music therapist may use such as music improvisation, music listening, song writing, lyric discussion, music and imagery, music performance, learning through music, and movement to music. Within these basic methods there are a variety of approaches. The good news is that the client does not need to have any special music training or knowledge of music to benefit from music therapy.

Music therapists do not diagnose any physical, mental or communication disorder; but they accept referrals for music therapy services from medical, developmental, mental health or education professionals; family members; clients; or caregivers.

Music therapists often work with a team of other professionals. When working independently, music therapists confer as possible with another professional, such as physician, psychologist, licensed clinical social worker, other mental health professional, or speech-language pathologist or audiologist to review the client's diagnosis, treatment needs, and treatment plan before providing music therapy services.

Who Can Provide Music Therapy Services?

Only a board-certified music therapist (MT-BC) is qualified to provide music therapy services. Music therapists receive the MT-BC credential after successfully passing an examination administered by CBMT. Eligibility to sit for the Music Therapy Board Certification Exam requires completion of one of the 72 AMTA-approved educational programs in music therapy, each consisting of a minimum of a bachelor's or its equivalence that includes 1200 hours of clinical training. Education and training standards are periodically reviewed to maintain current standards. In New Jersey, both Montclair State and Rowan Universities offer music therapy degree programs. After attaining the MT-BC, the music therapist is required to meet continuing education requirements to maintain the credential.

CBMT itself is a member of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE) and its board certification (MT-BC) program has been fully accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) since 1986, when NCCA was known as National Commission for Health Certifying Agencies. CBMT is the only certifying board for music therapy and NCCA accreditation ensures CBMT's compliance with stringent testing and measurement standards.

In 2020, a law was established that individuals providing music therapy services in New Jersey must be a Licensed Professional Music Therapist (LPMT) and as part of that state license requirement the therapist must have a MT-BC credential. This license is to be issued with oversight by the new State Board of Creative Arts and Activities Therapies.

As with all new licenses and in this case a new state board as well, it takes some time for the actual license to become available. All appointments for board members in the creative arts were completed in January of 2022. In 2023, regulations for the music therapist license went under review. Once the review process is completed and the board ratifies the regulations, licensing can begin. During the interim time between law and license issuance, you may be confident that a music therapist with the MT-BC credential designates a qualified music therapist and the actual license is not required.



What Other Credentials Might a Music Therapist Have?

Music therapists may have additional specialized training certificates designated in addition to the MT-BC; but these are not required. In New Jersey you may see designations such as:

- Analytical Music Therapist (AMT)
- Bonny Method of Guided Imagery (FAMI)
- Certified Counselor Hospice and Palliative Care Music Therapist
- Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Music Therapist (NICU-MT)
- Neurologic Music Therapist (NMT)
- Postpartum Music Therapist (PPMT)
- Vocal Psychotherapist

LCAT - This is a license music therapists use in New York State; but does not apply when providing music therapy services in New Jersey.

As of January 1, 2020 other older designations such as RMT (Registered Music Therapist); CMT (Certified Music Therapist); and ACMT (Advanced Certified Music Therapist) no longer exist, instead the qualified music therapist will have the MT-BC.

Some music therapists may have non-music therapy certificates/licenses/degrees that are not required; but provide additional skills such as

- Addiction Studies Counseling (ADC)
- Certified Brain Injury Specialist (CBIS)
- Certified Child Life Specialist (CCLS)
- Certified Clinical Trauma Specialist (CCTS)
- Certified Practitioner of Psychodrama, Sociometry and Group Psychotherapy
- Certified Rehabilitation Counselor
- Dialectical behavioral therapy (DBT)
- Developmental, Individual Difference, Relationship-based (DIR@/Floortime™) (DIR)
- Doctorate of Medical Humanities (DMH)
- Kindermusik
- Licensed Nursing Home Administrator (LNHA)
- Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC)
- Licensed Social Worker (LSW)
- Little Kids Rock
- Master Medical Humanities (MMH)
- Music Orff Training
- Music Together
- Sound Healing
- Sprouting Melodies
- Yoga Therapy -Registered Children's Yoga Teacher (RCYT®), Experienced Registered Yoga Teacher (E-RYT® 200), Yoga Teacher Certified (C-IAYT)