Music Therapy

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Music therapy is used here at NI Hospice to help patients with both their symptoms and pain as well as with emotional issues. It can be an effective way of expressing yourself when words are hard to find. Making music or listening to music with a Music Therapist can help you put words to thoughts and feelings which are confusing, difficult or frightening.

Music Therapy is not a music lesson and no previous experience of singing or playing instruments is necessary - for most people music accompanies them through life and different types of music/songs can be associated with certain times or life events.

What is Music Therapy?

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What sort of things will I do in Music Therapy?

Create a Musical Life Review - The Music Therapist will often spend time listening to certain music or songs with a patient and discuss how that song makes them feel and its significance in their life. Often these songs can be very meaningful to the patient and can lead them to talk about anxieties and uncertainties they have as a result of their illness. Sometimes the Music Therapist will support patients to create a musical life review - where they make a compilation CD of music that is meaningful to them – a kind of soundtrack to their life. They may wish to pass this on to their loved ones as music can be a great way of communicating with someone when we can’t find the right words ourselves.

Write songs - No prior experience of song writing is necessary as the Music Therapist will ask the patient what it is they want to say and together they will form it into a song and put some music to it. Again, the Music Therapist can record this onto a CD and this can be given to the patient to pass on to their loved one(s).

Improvisation - Gives patients a chance to use music as a way of expressing how they are feeling inside. The Music Therapist will work on a one to one basis or in a group situation and play instruments with the patients where they literally make the music up as they go along.

Legacy Recordings can be made by patients wishing to leave spoken messages for loved ones - something special for family to cherish.

Pain and Symptoms - In some situations the Music Therapist will play music to a patient who is tired, breathless, in pain, anxious or agitated and the music can help calm and soothe the patient enabling them to relax, which can ultimately help pain relief and enable sleep.

Escape - Playing or listening to music can also give a patient a means of escape and enable them to have a few moments to themselves, without thinking continuously about their illness and situation.

Fun - Music Therapy sessions can be a lot of fun and a patient can relax and laugh whilst taking part and this can really increase self-esteem and aid relaxation.