

Non-pharmacological Pain and Symptom Management

MUSIC or MUSIC THERAPY

MUSIC THERAPY: Listening to (or playing) music as a form of enjoyable distraction. Research indicates that listening to a person's preferred style of music can:

- Reduce pain
- Lower blood pressure, heart rate, and respiratory rate
- Improves sleep

Music Therapy is 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 degree program.

Healthcare team members can encourage the use of music without a credentialed therapist as outlined below.

Older adults may enjoy:

- Listening to their favorite type of music
- Singing hymns or other favorite songs
- Harp music
- Playing piano, guitar, or other instruments
- Dancing
- Watching children playing instruments or singing

What you can do:

- Explore with the older adult what are their musical preferences and experiences with music.
- Communicate preferences with the rest of the health care team.
- Advocate for access to items or opportunities necessary for using their preferred music strategies as a form of nondrug pain management (mobile devices/apps, YouTube, radio, TV).
- Consider a trial of encouraging and assisting the older adult to listen to music routinely (two or three times a day) for a short period of time (3-4 days) and communicate the outcomes with the healthcare team.
- When possible, assess pain level using the Numeric Rating Scale or Verbal Descriptor Scale prior to and after music therapy.
- If therapy is effective, include it in the older adult's plan of care and communicate with the healthcare team.

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References: (various website, mobile device apps, YouTube)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (n.d.-b). Pain. National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health. <https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/pain>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (n.d.-a). Music and health: What you need to know. National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health. <https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/music-and-health-what-you-need-to-know>

American Music Therapy Association. American Music Therapy Association | American Music Therapy Association (AMTA). (n.d.). <https://www.musictherapy.org/>