FAST FACTS: Music as Nondrug Pain Treatment

MUSIC therapy: Listening to (or playing) music as a form of enjoyable distraction.

✓ You loved one may enjoy:
  o Listening to their favorite type of music
  o Singing hymns or other favorite songs
  o Listening to instrumental or harp music
  o Playing piano, guitar, or other instruments
  o Dancing
  o Watching others play instruments or sing live

✓ How Does it Work?
  o Research indicates that listening to your preferred style of music can:
    1. Reduce pain
    2. Lower blood pressure, heart rate, and respiratory rate

✓ What Can you Do?
  o Discuss with your loved one their music preferences and experiences with music
  o Advocate for your loved one to have access to the items or opportunities necessary for using their preferred music as a nondrug pain management
  o Assist your loved one to gather the needed equipment or device (i.e. phone, computer, tablet, radio, CD/record/cassette player, television, headphones, internet connection, etc…) to listen to music they enjoy
  o Set up the equipment as needed for your loved one prior to the session
  o Ask your loved one prior to beginning each session what their pain/tension level is on a 0-10 pain scale and do this again at the end of the music session
  o Document pain ratings so you can share with your loved one’s healthcare team
What else the Caregiver should do

- Consider using a Pain Diary to note important information useful to the provider on a regular basis.
- Encourage your loved one to try a non-drug treatment and document the impact on their pain in their Pain Diary

Adapted from
2. The Nursing Home Pain Management Algorithm Clinical Trial, R01 NR009100, 7/1/05 – 4/30/10; Mary Ersek (PI) Used with permission of Mary Ersek and HPNA (2009).