

Music CARE

Music is found in every culture and population in the world. It is one of the few activities that every human being can relate to in some form.

Music can provide positive emotional experiences by increasing the listener's focus and attention, along with feelings of comfort, security, structure and personal identity and joy.

Music also gives CAREGiversSM a way to socialize, build rapport and communicate with clients. Music offers a platform to discover, learn and reminisce about a client's family traditions, past experiences and memories.

Music's positive effects can help improve quality of life and daily living. Music, used effectively, can provide not only positive outcomes for the client, but also help to establish leadership and trust in the CAREGiver by the client and his/her family.

Listen to music with your client.

Discover by asking questions and playing different types of music what type of music your client prefers. Use CDs, iPods or live music (if you play an instrument).



Record the following:

- What did we listen to?
- How did my client react?
- What were we doing when we listened?
- What did we talk about?
- Does the client remember this song?
- Where was the client when the song was popular?

Use your client's song preferences as background music to provide structure and comfort during activities, such as bathing and eating.

Background music can offer feelings of comfort, relaxation and focus, allowing for stress-free bathing, increased food intake and less agitation overall. Keep background music structured. NEVER keep music on for lengthy periods of times without breaks of silence in between. As a general rule of thumb, 15-20 minutes or the amount of time it takes to complete an activity is recommended for music intervals.

Use music to help relax your client or to provide your client excitement and activity.

Turn the lights down, suggest that the client close his or her eyes, and play music that encourages relaxation or meditative time. This technique can be used at any stage in a senior's life.

Play upbeat, big band tunes and dance! Encourage your client to move around the room, move his or her arms and/or legs from a sitting position, or clap or sway from side to side. Movement in reaction to music is a great form of exercise.

Sing with your client.

Singing along with music or making up silly songs about what you are doing are great ways to take the focus off of a frustrating situation. Singing lifts spirits and connects people. Let your clients pick their favorite songs to sing.



Remember:

- **Everyone is different.** Preferences will change from person to person.
- **Be confident.** Fear of sounding silly only keeps you from helping to improve your client's quality of life.
- **Focus on the client.** Make eye contact. Active listening is crucial. Never leave music on for long periods of time.
- **Recognize any changes through music.** Does your client seem more relaxed? Do certain types of music appear to cause your client agitation? Are daily activities easier to complete? Record your findings in activity logs and the Client Journal.
- **Never force music.** If your client seems uninterested, don't give up. Instead, wait a while and try again.

Notes:

Clair, A., & Memmott, J. (2008). *Therapeutic Uses of Music with Older Adults*. (2nd ed.).

Silver Springs, MD: American Music Therapy Association.

Aldridge, D. (2000). *Music Therapy in Dementia Care*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

This resource is brought to you by Kirby Cunningham, Director of CAREGiver Experience, from Anderson, Indiana.