



INTERGENERATIONAL MUSIC MAKING

**MUSIC THERAPY CYP EVALUATION
AUGUST 2022**

IZZY SWINHOE - STANDEN

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



Frimley Health
NHS Foundation Trust



What does a Music Therapist do?

"Music is a powerful tool for self-expression. It can reach our emotions and allows freedom of communication which needs no words."

Music is a powerful tool for self-expression. It can reach our emotions and allows freedom of communication which needs no words. Music therapy uses shared music-making to help children and young people (CYP) cope more effectively with their lives and difficulties, and allows them to show their potential. It is based on the understanding that all human beings are able to respond to music irrespective of ability or disability, and is supported by a growing evidence base and child development psychological theories.



In music therapy sessions the therapist, child or young person make music together. It is shared and spontaneous, and through this the two establish a musical relationship in which emotions can be expressed, explored and worked through in a safe environment.



Music therapy involves the use of sound, rhythm and improvised music in order to form a musical relationship between the client and therapist. Within this relationship, the child or young person can respond, gain confidence and a sense of self. Change can take place and the individual's areas of strengths and needs can be explored within a safe and creative environment. Music therapy sessions also offer a child or young person a different experience of shared play, interaction, learning and understanding through verbal and non-verbal communication.

What are the benefits of music therapy?



Music therapy can help CYP develop their communication skills by promoting concentration and listening skills. Music therapy also helps children and young people find ways to express feelings creatively and constructively beyond their behaviour as well as alleviating stress and lifting mood. Parents also benefit from music therapy as this helps them understand their child's evolving needs and aids relationship growth and development between parent and child. Music therapists provide emotional support during hospital stays for children, young people and their care givers.



The CYP Music Therapy service delivery

This post was set up and funded as a partnership between Intergenerational Music Making (IMM) and the NHS. Charlotte Miller (CEO of Intergenerational Music Making and Sarah Wimblett Commissioning Manager (Adults MH + LD, Children + Young People's Services and Maternity) Frimley CCG met to discuss the possibility of running a pilot on the CYP ward at Frimley. From these conversations it was agreed that a three-month contract working with CYP admitted with mental health difficulties would be piloted on the wards. Those admitted to the CYP wards are often medically fit but waiting on placements or provision for discharge as parents feel that it is unsafe to have them at home. Placements are often limited and so this means that the CYP are 'stuck' with nowhere to go except to wait in hospital.

Therefore the aims of music therapy in this setting was to benefit CYP through improving mood, confidence and self-esteem, whilst offering a distraction from pain or discomfort, providing a confidential space for self-expression, to have fun, to meet and socialise with other patients and families, alleviating or being with difficult thoughts and feelings and to generally supporting their mental health whilst on the ward. Supporting them and their caregivers during this challenging transitional period.

Having a music therapist on site offering one to one sessions provided a safe space where CYP could explore emotions, have fun, make music, sing and play instruments.

"Music therapy transformed my child from a screaming toddler (in pain) to my son again – it literally saved us today"
(Parent)



The Music Therapist's Day on the CYP ward

I worked closely with the ward staff including the Senior Sisters, Nurse in Charge and Play Team. I attended the Play Team morning handover to discuss potential patients who we thought would benefit from music therapy and I received an update on the status of patients I saw regularly.



During the day my work was varied – sometimes I went to pre-op to use music as a distraction from pain or receiving medication or a space to share anxiety and fears for both patients and parents. Other times I based myself in the Play Room where younger children were referred to me. With the Play Team, we created a fluid space for exploration and play using musical instruments and toys. I saw two or three individuals for music therapy, either in their bed/room, a meeting room (Octopus) or in the Play Room, as well as running an open group for parents and younger children together in the Play Room.

“When X was having music therapy, ASD behaviours disappeared for a moment” (Play Team)

Case Study 1



Patient E is a 15 year old with severe mental health difficulties who was hospitalised for 7 months. It was thought that music therapy would alleviate negative feelings and provide a confidential space for self-expression. During the first (trial) session we wrote a song together about walking through the woods. E was shown a simple chord on the guitar to accompany our singing. A member of staff was present throughout the session. E responded well to music therapy and I thought further sessions would be beneficial.

“Music therapy is just amazing – my daughter was so engaged, more than I’ve seen her this week” (Parent)

We had 5 further sessions where we explored the guitar, kalimba and wrote more songs. Creating something was clearly important for E and there was a clear benefit of music therapy. When E was engaged in something there was focus, humour and playfulness, especially in our song writing. E continued music therapy until a placement became available and moved away from the hospital.

A referral and report was written to accompany E to the placement so that there was continuity in the work we had already done.

Case Study 2



Patient A is an 11 year old with severe anxiety and a possible eating disorder. A presented with shyness and tentativeness at first. A was in hospital for a month and had 4 music therapy sessions. It was thought that music therapy would provide a confidential space for self-expression and exploration.

During our sessions we explored the feeling of anxiety through song writing and playing the ukulele, kalimba and small percussion instruments. We sometimes improvised music together which was creative and spontaneous, and these interactions were like a musical conversation. A was keen to attend each week and expressed that music therapy provided space and a change of scenery.

A responded well to music therapy and we wrote several songs, putting words to difficult feelings and singing about them. This was therapeutic because it gave A acknowledgement and a way to express emotions without judgement. It was recommended that A continue music therapy outside of hospital and a report and referral was written.

Feedback

Music therapy has been seen to change patient mood, especially in CAMHS patients who often present with low mood, and toddlers who might be in distress from pain or being in a strange environment. There are so many physical benefits to music therapy, as well as a way of developing hearing and concentration. It can also help patient bonding with caregivers, staff and therapists. Group sessions offered a place where patients could come together to share something enjoyable but also different. Music therapy sessions have the potential to inspire CAMHS patients to take up a new hobby, giving them a purpose and focus outside of the hospital and in their everyday lives...

Having a regular music therapist on the ward has improved patient experience as music therapy has been seen to distract and provide a means of communication for patients and their caregivers. Music therapy has been seen to improve patient connections through song writing and musical interactions. Long-term patients would have something to look forward to and caregivers would see that there is something being provided to aid mental health on the ward. (Staff feedback)

"I think we should keep the music therapist here at Frimley Park Hospital because it is so much fun. Izzy (the music therapist) really helps me with taking my mind off everything that has been going on at hospital. I think everyone can agree that it is also a great distraction for everyone and it is a great change of scenery. It also helps with mental health because it's not fun to be lying in bed all the time. I, personally, get very excited while waiting for Izzy to come and I always look forward to it. Anyway, that's all the reasons why I think we should have a music therapist." (Patient at Frimley Park Hospital)

"I just wanted to write to thank you for your help with my daughter over the last few weeks. As you know my daughter has been suffering from extreme anxiety which unfortunately led to her not eating. It has been really hard to motivate my daughter to do anything on the ward. That said, your music therapy sessions have been one of the few things she has looked forward to, to the extent of asking every day when you are next back on the ward. She really enjoys the sessions which is great from a parent's perspective, but more importantly it calms her down and makes her so much more open to discussing her challenges and potential solutions. Without your therapy my daughter would not have opened up to the extent she has and we would not be as progressed as we are in helping her overcome her challenges. Thank you so much for your commitment to my daughter."

Conclusion

There is a substantial need for music therapy on the CYP ward, demonstrated by the number of patients with mental health difficulties and staff provision for them. Staff are overwhelmed with the amount of work and are incredibly stretched. Having a music therapist on site reduces pressure, alleviates stress and shares the caseload burden. Music therapists can provide pain treatment, a distraction, something to do whilst waiting to be seen or discharged and is also a great way to combat boredom for patients and caregivers. Working with mental health nurses can empower staff to use music therapy techniques in their work and therefore reduces the pressure on them too. Future work could include education sessions for staff on how to use music effectively on the ward every day.

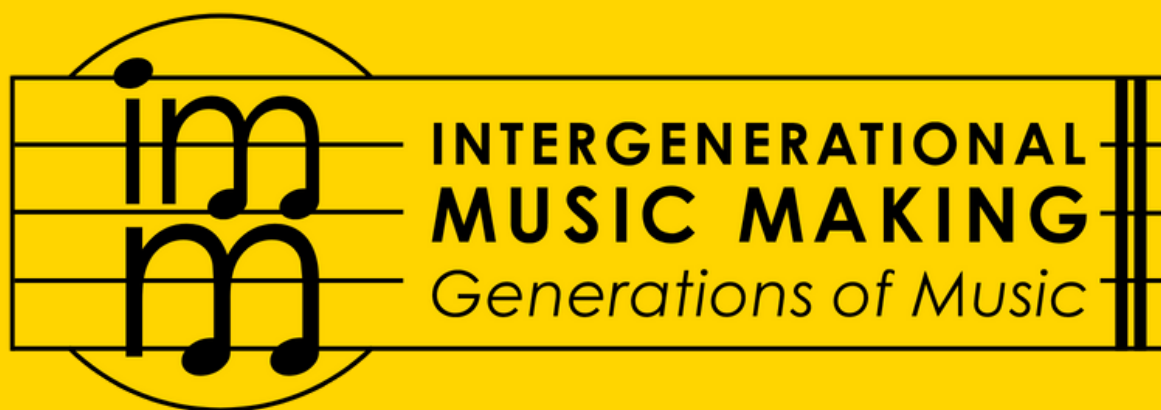
"Having a music therapist on site reduces pressure, alleviates stress and shares the caseload burden"



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