

What is Perfect Harmony?

Perfect Harmony is a music resource for care partners to identify appropriate generational music and activities to engage individuals living with dementia in a shared music experience.

Why is music important?

- Stimulates both hemispheres of the brain
- “Enjoyable” experience and opportunity for choice making
- Improve/maintain quality of life/wellness
- Increase meaningful interactions between an individual and care partner
- Opportunity for social engagement
- Useful tool in both individual and group settings

Communication Tips

- Always introduce yourself
 - Address individual by preferred name
 - Approach individual from front
 - Be patient, flexible, understanding and genuine
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- Refrain from saying, “Do you remember?” or “Remember when this happened?”
 - Try saying: Does that song sound familiar?
 - “Introduce” topics assuming someone won’t be familiar at first, i.e. There was a famous singer named Elvis Presley who was known as the “King of Rock and Roll”. He sang a song called "Jailhouse Rock".
 - Increase use of non-verbal communication techniques (Gestures, Visual Cues, Pictures)
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- Speak slowly and calmly
 - Wait 5 seconds after asking a question before following up
 - Use short simple sentences
 - Don’t interrupt an individual with dementia, let them interrupt you!

This resource was created in collaboration with a board-certified music therapist.



*The Great American
Songbook Foundation*
Michael Feinstein, Founder

Keep in mind:

- Individuals may cry or appear upset when engaging in music. This does not always mean they are having a negative experience, i.e. songs may make someone feel sad if they are remembering someone that has passed away. Validate all emotions - do NOT ignore a negative response.
- Ways to validate:
 - "I'm sorry you're feeling sad"
 - "It sounds like you had a wonderful time together"
- Person-centered/Person-first approach
 - People are people
 - People are not their diagnosis

If you observe sudden and/or frequent changes in behavior, consult with a:

- Board-Certified Music Therapist, Social Worker, Doctor, Counselor or other Healthcare professional
- This is a non-clinical tool for using music for social engagement in the care of an individual with dementia. Some individuals will need more. If that is the case, we encourage you to visit www.musictherapy.org to learn more about Music Therapy, an established healthcare profession that uses music to address clinical goals.

A Guide to Appropriate Music:

- Music choices should be generation-appropriate (listened to in late adolescence or early adulthood) & "sing-able" (not too high or complex)
- Generation Guide:
 - 90 years old = 15 in 1942, 25 in 1952
 - 80 years old = 15 in 1952, 25 in 1962
 - 70 years old = 15 in 1962, 25 in 1972
 - 60 years old = 15 in 1972, 25 in 1982

You can find wonderful recordings and playlists on:



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