

Music Engagement Tips for Care Partners

By Meredith Hamons, MT-BC; North Austin Music Therapy

- 1) Use client/loved one's preferred music.
- 2) How to determine preferred music:
 - A) Ask your client/loved one directly
 - B) Ask client/loved one's family members
 - C) Guess and Check - Try music that was popular when client/loved one was around 18-25 years old and/or the music that was popular when their parents/primary caregivers were 18-25 years old
 - D) Keep track of songs that generate a strong response for future reference
 - E) Try new songs that are similar in artist, genre, decade, etc. to songs that have generated a strong response or they have indicated a preference for
- 3) Be cognizant of volume; its always better to start soft and increase, than start too loudly.
- 4) Use speakers rather than headphones whenever possible to encourage a shared listening experience.
- 5) Encourage simple movements while listening together... tap toes, sway/shake shoulders, clap, dance, march, etc. and be sure to move with them.
- 6) Look at pictures that relate to the song, if applicable. For example, pictures of Elvis performing Jailhouse Rock, pictures of the beach while listening to "Surf City," etc. Use these to aid in discussion.
- 7) Ask questions after listening. Consider starting with narrow yes or no questions and then broadening to more open-ended questions. Try questions about facts first (Did you ever see Elvis perform on TV? What do you like to do at the beach?) but also consider adding feeling questions (How did you feel when you danced to this song with your husband? How does the music make you feel?)
- 8) Always remember that crying and sadness are okay responses to music. Be with your client/loved one in the moment and don't try to just "make them happy." Seek additional support if the feelings of sadness are overwhelming or if your client/loved one seems to be stuck and having trouble processing something.
- 9) Always meet your client/loved one where they are in that moment.
- 10) Have fun! Music is a great way to engage with your loved one and also a great way to engage multiple generations together!

MUSICAL PREFERENCES QUESTIONNAIRE

Use this form to gather and organize as much information as you can about your loved one’s musical preferences. This information can be obtained by asking your loved one directly, consulting with friends, family members, and caregivers, and by noting his or her personal history.

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| NAME | DATE OF BIRTH |
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FAVORITE GENRES/STYLES OF MUSIC:
(ex. Blues, Jazz, Folk, Hymns, Musicals, Classical, Country, Patriotic, Rock and Roll, Big Band, Pop)

FAVORITE ARTISTS OR BANDS:

KNOWN FAVORITE SONGS:

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION AND INVOLVEMENT:

MILITARY SERVICE AND INVOLVEMENT:

INSTRUMENTS PLAYED/PARTICIPATION IN BAND OR CHOIR:

HOBBIES AND INTERESTS:



Allegra Hein (MM, MT-BC) is a board-certified music therapist who consults with Perfect Harmony. Allegra received her Master of Music Degree in Piano Performance from Ohio University and is currently pursuing her Master's in Music Therapy. Allegra has been a board-certified music therapist since 2016. Originally working with individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities, Allegra accepted her current position as Regional Music Therapist for Justus Senior Living in February 2017. Her work with older adults includes: facilitating individual and group music therapy sessions, leading resident choirs, performing lecture recitals, presenting Music Appreciation classes and organizing a summer and winter concert series. In addition to her work as a music therapist, Allegra performs regularly throughout Indianapolis as a collaborative pianist.

Here are Allegra's 5 tips for how music can be beneficial for you personally in your own self care practices.

5 Music Techniques to Incorporate in Your Self-Care Routine

1. Have an "SOS" playlist with songs that have a positive association for you
2. Listen to music with a slower tempo for relaxation
3. Use music to process difficult emotions
4. Have a transition anthem: support the highs and lows throughout your day
5. Make music! Dance, sing, play/learn a new instrument!

