



## MUSIC THERAPY IN 6 QUESTIONS

Music therapy uses music and/or its characteristics (sounds, rhythms, melodies or harmony) to enable people to communicate, interact, learn and express their emotions. Two techniques exist: active music therapy, which consists of using musical instruments or one's own voice; and receptive music therapy, which is based on listening to music.

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### For whom and why?

**Apart from people who do not appreciate music, all people with dementia can participate in musical interventions,** regardless of the stage of the disease.

Music therapy is particularly indicated at the beginning of the disease for people with signs of anxiety and/or depression. Music therapy is also suitable for people with language or behavioural problems.

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### How is the intervention conducted?

**Sessions are conducted individually or in group**

of 4 to 8 participants. In some cases, family members and care staff may be invited to join the sessions to help and accompany people.

A music therapy programme generally consists of 6 to 8 sessions of 1.5 hours each, with one session per week.

The sessions follow the same pattern: a reminder of session's objectives; an introduction of the participants; a warm-up (in the case of a singing workshop or the use of instruments); one or more specific exercises; a time for discussion at the end of the session.

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### What are the benefits?

**Music can be relaxing or stimulating.** Listening to music induces a state of relaxation that reduces behavioural symptoms, depression and anxiety. Music can stimulate people and reduce apathy (indifference) by awakening their senses. Music helps to recall old memories but also to learn new things. Music also stimulates interaction with others and contributes to well-being and quality of life.



## 4 How does it work?

**Music therapy targets and involves** 3 areas:

- Emotional: some music and songs are strongly linked to moments in life and to emotions felt. The emotions felt when listening to known or unknown music affect mood and behaviour.
- Memory: songs, lyrics and old tunes heard in youth are not forgotten. People can remember the words or the tune of a song. They can also learn new words or information from music.
- Social: music is a social and sharing activity with others that promotes communication, exchange and social interactions.

Whether alone or in a group, organised or spontaneous, music just for the sake of music is an enjoyable, convivial and self-esteem-building activity.

## 5 When is it contraindicated?

**Some people may not appreciate certain types of musical interventions.**

The sessions may bring up difficult memories. In rare cases, these unpleasant memories may cause opposition or crying. In this case, professionals are there to support the person and adapt the session.

**In all cases, it is necessary to discuss it beforehand with professionals.**



## 6 Who can provide music therapy?

**Music therapy is provided** by music therapists who are trained and experienced in working with people with dementia.



**Do not forget your glasses and/or hearing aids if you need them.**



**Your participation in the sessions is free. You will always be asked if you wish to participate.**

This sheet is adapted from a chapter in the guide *Psychosocial interventions and dementia: understanding, knowing, implementing* which presents 10 psychosocial interventions.

