

The Sounds of Music in Care
Manitoba Long Term Care Conference
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Presented by Bev Foster, Executive Director, Room 217 Foundation

1. The Power of Music in Care

The capacity to care is the thing that gives life its deepest meaning and significance.
Pablo Casals

Music is a powerful care modality because it:

- connects people
- crosses generations and cultures
- intricate part of life passage and is ubiquitous
- means of expression
- reaches into all domains
- symbiotic relationship with body

There are 2 main ideas about music and healing.

- Sound and music are direct curative agents
- Sound and music are supports to natural balance, harmony and wellness

In the 21st century, music is used as a therapeutic means in medicine.

- Music therapy
- CAM - complementary alternative medicine
- Voice therapy
- Listening therapy
- Performing arts medicine
- Soul and energy medicine - vibroacoustic therapy, bowls, tuning forks

2. Music Across the Long Term Care Spectrum

Songs are our connections to life. They connect us to our inner world; they bring us closer to others; they keep us company when we are alone. They articulate our beliefs and reaffirm our values. They arouse, they accompany and they release. And as the years pass, our songs bear witness to our lives and give voice to our experiences. They rekindle the past, reflect the present and project the future. Songs weave tales of our joys and sorrow; they express our dreams and disappointments, our fears and triumphs. They are our musical diaries, our life stories. They are the sounds of our development.
(Bruscia, 1989)

i) End of Life Care (On Wings of Song DVD)

The power of music may be most potent at the end of life when all other senses are shutting down and the melodies are not only distinguishable but spiritually sustaining. The very breadth and depth of music makes it a wonderful tool at end of life by

promoting relaxation, pain control, a sense of well-being and support of emotional and spiritual expression.

Physiological Reasons:

- To stabilize physiological functions i.e. regulate breathing through entrainment
- To induce sleep
- To direct the mind away from physical pain and depression
- To reduce nausea and vomiting

Psychosocial Reasons:

- To evoke memories and reminiscence
- To provide comfort
- To facilitate emotional expression
- To unlock deeply traumatized places
- To decrease feelings of isolation and fear
- To work through death/dying issues
- To assist in release and closure
- To decrease agitation

Quality of Life Reasons:

- To increase quality of life
- To create a beautiful environment
- To create an auditory sanctuary
- To share the moment and spend quality time together

Spiritual Reasons:

- To promote relaxation and contemplative mind states
- To discover meaning in life and suffering
- To experience richness of spirit and core spirituality
- For remembrance of God

ii) Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (story of Nanny Gross)

Musical perception, musical sensibility, musical emotion and musical memory can survive long after other forms of memory have disappeared. The role of music with people diagnosed with ADRD is often to help:

- relieve fear and symptoms of depression, perhaps divert their attention and contribute to a positive shift in mood by structuring time and providing an opportunity for meaningful participation where people with dementia may successfully engage
- stimulate cognitive function
- preserve the self
- trigger memories

- act as a carrier of information
- with carryover effects, for example, improvements of mood, behavior, even cognitive function which can persist for hours or days after they have been set off by music
- become an iconic representation of the feelings they can no longer express in words
- provide sensory stimulation
- enrich and enlarge existence
- provide structured reality, order, predictability.
- give meaning to the environment when other experiences are not understandable.
- become an iconic representation of the feelings they can no longer express in words. Music from the past that is familiar and is associated with experiences and memories is the most likely to evoke responses.
- caregiving spouses to experience emotional closeness with their loved one.
- decrease agitated behaviors at mealtime
- help caregivers in providing care, for example in bathing, dressing their loved one
- contribute to the dignity of the person when there is loss of verbal articulation and physical ambulation, where there is incontinence and withdrawal
- elicit observable responses i.e. changing facial expression and tension, increasing eye contact, vocal activity, physical movements of limbs.

iii)Pain Management - Music as an Audioanalgesic (literature review)

The benefits of music for pain relief has been a focus of recent research. In a 2008 Cochrane Review on Music for pain relief, the authors found that music should not be considered as a primary method for pain relief. In a review of 51 studies from 1986-2004, reviewers found that listening to music for treatment of pain offers potential advantages of low cost, ease of provision and safety. They found that music reduced pain, increased the number of patients who reported at least 50% pain relief and reduced requirements for morphine-like analgesics. They concluded, however, that the clinical relevance of music for pain relief in clinical practice is unclear.

Mitchell, L.A. et al. (2008). *An Investigation of the Effects of Music and Art on Pain Perception, Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity and the Arts*. Vol. 2, No. 3, 162-170

- Distraction of attention
- Feeling of control over pain

Short, A., (2007). *Theme and variations on quietness: Relaxation-focused music and imagery in aged care*. Australian Journal of Music Therapy, Volume 18, 39-61

- Active relaxation
- Stimulates imagery

MacCaffrey, R., Locsin, R., (2006). *The Effect of Music on Pain and Acute Confusion in Older Adults Undergoing Hip and Knee Surgery*. *Holistic Nurse Practice*, 20(5):218-224

- Preferred music
- Environments of healing and music listening
- Discretionary intervention

3. The Room 217 Story

The vision of the Room 217 Foundation is to care for the whole person with music.

www.room217.ca / DOORWAY newsletter /Foundation

Resources:

Room 217 CDs -Production Values

- familiar and hopeful songs that are a mix of styles - classical, pop, Broadway, spiritual, folk and movie
- sixty minute continuous play discs color-coded for easy usage, gently arranged and performed with no angles or bumps or surprises that would startle or agitate the listener
- tempo reflective of slower breathing and paced around 60 beats per minute which stimulates Alpha brain wave activity, the state of calm and relaxation
- performed and recorded on acoustic instruments (not digitized or sampled) in order to maximize the healing properties of vibrations
- performers who are fluent in many musical styles and production that is recorded live and simultaneous
- 3 albums are instrumental only, 3 albums include sung lyrics

Room 217 DVDs

- Images that are evocative, familiar and pleasing
- Relaxing, tranquil colors
- Each song themed with a string of images combining still and panned images with fades
- 7-12 second rate of image change offering moments of fixed focus for lingering and reflection
- images set to Room 217's Classic Comfort album
- one hour play

4.Introducing Music As Care

The power of music to integrate and cure...is quite fundamental. It is the profoundest nonchemical medication. Oliver Sacks, M.D.

While there may be desired outcomes when using music therapeutically, there are no formulas. Each person and each relationship of care is unique and music evokes different responses. The starting place of using music in care is openness and compassion.

Considerations for musical choices

- What is the desired effect?
- What is the person's preference?
- Are there perceptual issues?
- What has been the previous musical exposure?
- Does the person have a particular religious background?
- What is the age of the person?

Using Recorded Music

- Consider how the music will be played
- If there is hearing loss, is there an amplification device available?

Performing music

- Instrument playing
- Singing

Using Music as a modality

- Music and massage, therapeutic touch
- Entrainment
- Vibroacoustics

Using Music in Programing

- Entertainment
- Group Work
- Socializing

Using Music with Targeted Therapeutic Outcome (skilled music therapist)

- Music-based relaxation
- Music and imagery
- Toning
- Breath work
- Improvisation
- Song-writing

About Bev Foster: Bev Foster, BEd, BMus, AMus, ARCT, is an experienced performer, songwriter and music educator whose inspirational music has received numerous awards and nominations. Currently, Bev is the Executive Director of the Room 217 Foundation, an organization that cares for the whole person with music. She travels widely to perform and speak to a variety of groups. Bev was published this year in the US Journal: Alzheimer's Care Today: Best Practices in Dementia Care. Bev lives with her husband Rob and four children in Port Perry, Ontario.

Recommended Reading:

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