



Music Helps: Pilot Report 2022

Executive Summary

Introduction

In 2018, Pavithra Gangadharan (Director of Heritage ElderCare Services) approached Music as Therapy International to help incorporate music¹ as an integral part of the care her staff provided at Kshetra Assisted Living.

Inspired by an existent, Swedish training course 'Mötas i Musik', we worked with music therapist Nina Cherla to develop our own online training tool, Music Helps. The course was devised to give caregivers in India an understanding of the role music can play for people living with dementia. It comprises five interactive chapters of guidance, videos, exercises, and resources. Music Helps is available to complete in Hindi, Telegu and English.

Music Helps was piloted in Kshetra Assisted Living at the end of 2021. To begin, we wanted to fully understand the participants' starting point: What did they already know about the role of music within dementia care? Surveys were interspersed throughout the course to help us evaluate the relevance of teaching content, accessibility and the impact on participants' caregiving and their own well-being.

Evidence and analysis

22 people completed the course in the pilot phase (participants). 16 completed surveys and provided detailed feedback from their learning experience (respondents). Feedback indicates that technical issues may have primarily hindered some participants from completing surveys.

100%

of participants enjoyed the Music Helps course

100%

of respondents said Music Helps benefitted their well-being

100%

of participants said they would use what they learnt in future care provision

Music Helps was given a 4.8/5-star rating by participants. Participants also reported their knowledge about dementia and using music increased, learnt new musical skills and techniques, and acquired new musical activities. 94% of participants found the real-life examples in the course 'very useful' and 81% found the topics covered 'very useful'.

Prior to starting the course, 31% of respondents selected the highest level of confidence with respect to their knowledge of dementia. This increased to 88% upon completion of the course. 25% selected the highest level of confidence with respect to their understanding of how music can help people living with dementia, which then increased to 94% upon completion of the course.

¹ Music refers to the use of music in a therapeutic way.

“ Overall theme will help us and there is no difficulty to understand the theme.

Music Helps participant's feedback

88% of participants selected the highest level when asked how much music will feature in their future caregiving. Following course completion, participants reported how music was positively impacting the symptoms shown by the people living with dementia in their care, including depression, anxiety and issues with memory.

Strengths of the course: included [wide accessibility](#), a [deeper understanding](#) and an [extended toolkit](#) for participants, [increased confidence](#) and evidence of [application of learning in practice](#). This not only saw a reported [positive immediate impact for the people living with dementia](#), but also [positive impact on participants' own well-being](#). The course was given a universally strong rating with some participants reporting it highly relevant and enjoyable to complete.

Vulnerabilities of the course: included [some technical issues affecting accessibility](#) and, as there has not yet been time to see if participants continue putting their learning into practice over time, [we do not yet know if the training translates into sustainable changes to care provision](#). Management support appeared important to participants and there is a potential [risk of higher attrition² when the course is accessed by independent caregivers](#).

Conclusion

These strengths and vulnerabilities, alongside the reported impact of the course for participants and the people living with dementia in their care, make us feel confident in Music Helps as an effective and enjoyable training tool. Music Helps can be used to build caregivers' confidence in their knowledge and use of music, as well as benefit their own well-being, using relevant and culturally meaningful content.

Thank you

Among all of our participating contributors and wider team, we would particularly like to acknowledge the vision of Pavithra Gangadharan and the resourcefulness, commitment and considerable expertise of Nina Cherla. Additionally, we are grateful to Katarina Lindblad and Demenscentrum for their generosity in allowing us to build on the fantastic example of their 'Mötas i Musik' course. We would also like to thank the pilot participants for taking part in Music Helps, their detailed feedback and their commitment to using music. We would also like to thank our incredible supporters, whose willingness to support new ideas made this project possible, specifically: Bryan Guinness Charitable Trust, Cupsmith, and Stuart Riley.

² Attrition refers to those participants who did not complete the course, either enrolling and not starting or starting and not completing all the chapters.