

What to expect from your music project

A guide for care and education practitioners



Participating in training and learning new skills can be daunting. This short guide has been designed to give you an idea of what will be involved in your introductory training project with Music as Therapy International and what you can hope to achieve.

“ I most enjoyed people’s responses. The way people grew in confidence to express themselves... communication became more fluid. Leading my first session, I felt nervous. But as the session progressed it became very enjoyable because people were enjoying themselves.”

Gill, Care Practitioner



music as therapy
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What is this project?

This training project has been developed by Music as Therapy International following a request from your setting. We believe there are ways that you could incorporate music into the opportunities you offer your service users – or develop the ways you are already using music - and we are looking forward to exploring some music therapy techniques and activities with you.

“ I knew the client group enjoyed music but over the weeks it's amazing how they remember words, names and instruments... I have really enjoyed it. I was quite skeptical and had doubts about whether residents would enjoy & participate. Residents have loved it. ”

Care Practitioner

What's going to happen?

Firstly our music therapist will want to get to know you, your setting and the service users you are working with. We want to understand the ways you are already working, to see the things you are proud of and to know if there is anything specific that you would like to improve. Are there any service users you find challenging to work with or any particular places in your day where you think music might be helpful? We will be asking for your help to identify which service users you would like to explore making music with and to find a good time and space for music sessions to take place.

Then our music therapist will be available weekly for the duration of the project. Initially, he or she will demonstrate ways music can be used with the service users you have chosen together. This may be in a group music session or in an individual session, depending on why you have chosen the service users or what you think is the most helpful format for music making for you.

“ Susanna was patient and kind and was always available to answer any questions no matter how silly we thought they might be. ”

Care Practitioner



From week to week the music therapist will be involving you in the musical activities more and more. You won't be under pressure to do anything you haven't seen the music therapist do first or that you don't feel comfortable with. But over the course of the project you will have the chance to try out the techniques and music activities yourself and, by the end of the project, even to lead the music session or parts of the music session. The music therapist will be there to guide, support and encourage you every step of the way.

“ Having the sessions run over 6 weeks, I was able to think about them and ask questions, and then the gradual take over made the whole thing less daunting. ”

Early Years Practitioner

At the end of the project you will have some new music skills and ideas which have been chosen to suit your service user(s) and to build on your existing practice. You will have had the chance to try them out with your service user(s) and to build you confidence using music. We will also leave you with a booklet detailing the ways you have seen music being used during the project, alongside helpful tips and ideas to guide you as you continue to use music after the project ends.

“ The staff are keen to keep the sessions going but do need prompting to do so in a timely way as this could be delayed due to other pressures. Once started the enthusiasm is readily maintained. ” *Manager*

It's helpful to find time after each session to catch up with the music therapist, ideally without your service users alongside you. 15 minutes to reflect together on what happened in the music session, to think about the ways the service user(s) responded to you, to the music therapist, to the music and to each other can make a massive difference to our shared understanding of how music is going to be relevant to you after the project ends.

“ I found most difficult: Being confident in leading the class in front of the music therapist... just afraid to make mistakes but soon realised that there are no mistakes, just opportunities. ”

Care Practitioner

Following up...

We will always be available for support, and understand the pressures of working in a busy care environment can get in the way of running regular sessions. Because of this, at six months the music therapist 'follows up' with a visit to your setting.

“ Support that we receive to do music therapy is very important and helps me to improve. ” *Care Practitioner*

Supporting your music

Once you are our Partner, you can sign up to our UK Newsletter, access our resources (including client-themed Activity Booklets and Evidence Bases for music and key client groups), and will have the opportunity to request support using a Partner Support Mechanism at any time via our website.

You will be part of a growing network of UK Partners working with client groups ranging from under-fives, to people with learning disabilities and people living with dementia. This is an exciting time to train, as the power of music as a tool for improving health and wellbeing is being recognised nationally – and we look forward to working with you! Browse our support resources on our Resource Page:

<http://www.musicastherapy.org/uk-resources>

“ Thanks for today felt I learned a lot more with some 1/1 training, got a lot out of it and thoroughly enjoyed it. ”

Care Practitioner

“ Perhaps the highlight for me though is to see the way in which Bev and Jesse have taken on board their training, developed it, made it their own and are continuing to share and pass on their skills to their residents. ”

Music Therapist

To find out more about meaningful music for the people in your care or to discuss training for your staff, please contact:

**freitagibbs@musicastherapy.org
020 7735 3231**



musicastherapy
www.musicastherapy.org