


Tiffany Music Therapy, 2024

Music & Well-being Toolkit

A Guide on Using Music In Achieving Wellness Goals





*"Music can name the
unnamable and
communicate the
unknowable."*

- Leonard Bernstein



Welcome to the *Music & Well-being* toolkit!

We put together a series of strategies, tools, and skills you can take home to use when you need some help or want to feel better.

We hope this toolkit teaches you something new about yourself!

MUSIC AND WELL-BEING TOOLKIT

A. If your life had an intro song, what would it be and why?

B. What song best represents YOU?

C. Name a song lyric that makes you feel positive, upbeat, or motivated:

Name 3 ways you use music throughout the day:

1.

2.

3.

Name 3 songs that are significant to you or hold meaning to you:

1.

2.

3.

10 ways you can change your day with music

Reach for familiar music: Listen to music that brings you back to memories that feel good. For example, listening to a specific song by Taylor Swift might remind you of your favourite memory from last summer.

Listen to your body: Everyone responds to music differently. Find music that feels good to you. What might be distracting to someone else, might be what helps you unwind. Find the music that helps you settle into your body and reconnect.

Try something new: Listen to a new artist or style of music you wouldn't usually listen to. When we explore outside the norms, we stimulate our brains in a new and unfamiliar way.

Focus on the lyrics: Choose a song that you feel especially drawn to at the moment and pay attention to the lyrics. Do you connect to them? Do they express how you're feeling or what you're going through? If not, find a song whose lyrics do just that.

Music-Based Mindfulness: Find a quiet space in your home, bring yourself into a seated position, and close your eyes. Put on a song that gives you a sense of peace, safety, and calmness. Breathe in and out - deeply and slowly - as you listen, bringing awareness to how the music is making you feel in partnership with your breath. Make note of how you feel before the exercise and after; did you notice a difference? If so, be specific about what shifted in your mind and body.

Instrumental Improvisation: Do you ever feel like you need to release an emotion or process your feelings, but don't have the words to do so? Us creative human beings need other ways of processing! If you have musical instruments in your home, try using those instruments as vehicles for expression. Need to release anger or anxiety? Try hitting a drum with the intention of release in mind. Need to process pain or sadness? Go over to the piano and play out those emotions. Explore how the different notes, sounds, and intensities might validate or shift your mood.

Free-Associative Journalling to Music: Do you ever feel overwhelmed, but aren't sure why? Or maybe you're just feeling like you're "in a funk" and can't pinpoint what may be going on? Well, this exercise is designed to help you explore and process those experiences. Put on a playlist of music that resonates with you, grab your journal and a pen, and just start freely writing or "free associating". Let your mind run free for as long as you need, and then see what came up for you. Make note of how you felt before and after engaging in this, and if you gained any clarity on what you may have been experiencing.

Positive Affirmations + Music: If you enjoy incorporating positive affirmations into your daily practices, try using lyrics from songs as your affirmation of the day. It's easier to remember the lyrics to a song than it is to remember a positive affirmation.



Using Music to Relax: The rhythm of your heartbeat can mirror the rhythm of the music you are listening to. If you're looking to relax or unwind, listen music that has a slow speed, a simple melody, and a beat and harmony that doesn't hold too many surprises. Here are 3 songs that tick these boxes:

1. **I Giorni**- *Ludovico Einaudi*
2. **Sleep**- *Max Richter*
3. **Fracture**- *Stephen Moccio*

Complete a few rhythmic activities: Regulating rhythmic movements are great for our nervous system because our brains speak in rhythms. It governs the beats of our hearts, the expansion and contraction of our breath, the waves of our digestion, and the cycles of our wake and sleep. Here are a few activities you can take part in while listening to music to reground yourself.

1. Rocking or swaying side to side
2. Bouncing on an exercise ball
3. Walking, biking, swimming, weight training
4. Kneading bread, chopping veggies, pulling weeds
5. Singing, drumming, dancing, playing an instrument

Research in Music

Supports it's Effectiveness in 6 Areas:

EMOTIONAL:

- Tap into repressed (bottled up) emotions that, with support, might then be released
- Lessen feelings of isolation
- Improve mood
- Decrease anxiety & depression
- Support self-expression
- Facilitate stress management

PHYSICAL:

- Impact your heart rate, blood pressure, and respiration (breathing) rate
- Support motor and speech rehabilitation
- Improve sleep
- Improve pain management
- Reduce asthma episodes
- Help premature infants with weight gain & sleep

COGNITIVE:

- Provide structure and increase sense of control
- Increase coping skills
- Impact symptoms of cognitive impairment
- Increase attention span
- Facilitate learning
- Increase & maintain memory

SPIRITUAL:

- Open the door to spiritual questions or beliefs
- Support loss
- Facilitate grieving

SOCIAL:

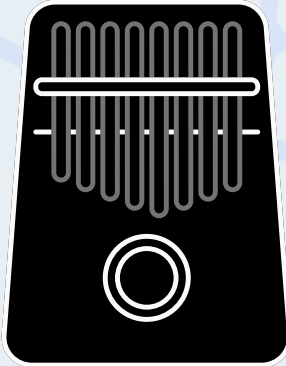
- Bring people together, not just at large gatherings like parties, weddings, or funerals, but also in intimate shared experiences.
- Encourage autistic children to communicate creatively.
- Help people with dementia to engage with people around them.

PSYCHOLOGICAL:

- Release of neurotransmitters that are necessary for good mental health, such as dopamine, and oxytocin.
- Reduces impulsivity
- Increased motivation

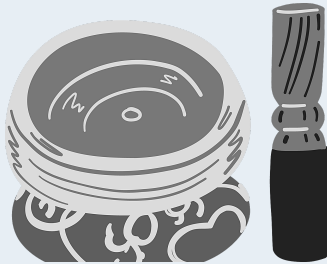
Recommended Instruments

Here are some affordable but easy to play instruments you can buy if you'd like to have a musical instrument.



Kalimba:

Plucking each of the prongs can provide a distraction for anxious thoughts.



Singing bowl:

The unique tones and calming vibrations promote deep relaxation and improve concentration.



Ukulele

Learning to play a song on this instrument provides a means to focus and relieve stress.

Your Brain On Music

Listening to music causes the brain to release dopamine, a **feel-good chemical**.



Music with a strong beat can stimulate brainwaves. Slow beats encourage the **slow brainwaves** that are associated with hypnotic or **meditative states**. **Faster beats** may encourage more alert and **concentrated thinking**.

Music occupies the **mind** with something familiar and soothing.

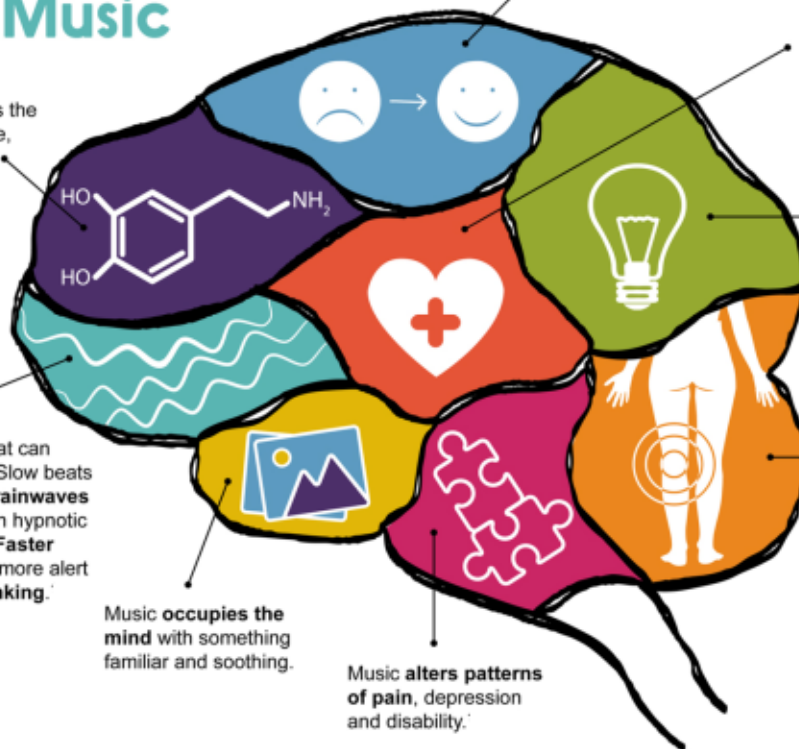
Music alters **patterns of pain**, depression and disability.

Music acts as a **distractor**, focusing the attention away from negative stimuli to something pleasant and encouraging.

Music has the **ability to alter** breathing and heart rate.

Music also has the power to **improve your state of mind**. This helps keep things like depression and anxiety at bay.

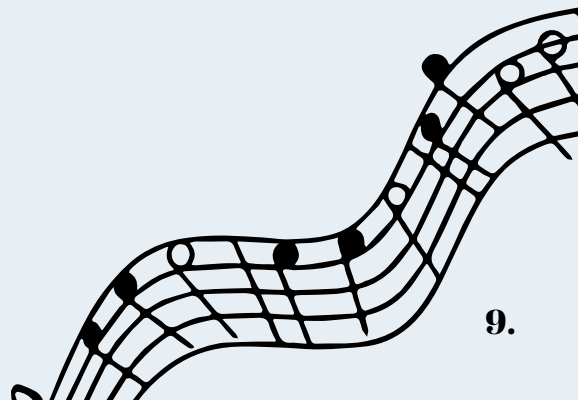
Music can help **reduce the perception of pain**.



Supportive Songs

Here is a list of songs that can offer you support during challenging times.

- Lullaby- Sigala, Paloma Faith
- This is Me- Greatest Showman
- Waving Through a Window- Dear Evan Hansen
- A Safe Place to Land- Sara Bareilles & John Legend
- Same Love- Macklemore
- Anxiety- Selena Gomez & Julia Michaels
- Demons- Imagine Dragons
- Fear is a Liar- Zach Williams
- You'll Be Okay- A Great Big World
- Put Down What You are Carrying- Trevor Hall, Brett Dennen
- Talk to Me- Cave town
- Good times Bad times- Edie Brickell
- Burning Gold- Christina Perri
- I am- India Arie
- Head Above Water- Avril Lavigne
- Say- John Mayer
- Scars to your Beautiful- Alessia Cara
- Praying- Kesha
- You Will Be Found- Dear Evan Hansen
- I am Light- India Arie
- The Winner Takes It All- ABBA
- Sound of Surviving- Nichole Nordeman
- Thunder- Imagine Dragons
- I am Enough- Daphne Willis
- Yellow- Coldplay
- Carry It Well- Sam Fischer
- Just like You- NF
- Underdog- Alicia Keys
- Better Days- Ant Clemons, Justin Timberlake
- Human- Christina Perri
- Waving Flag- K'naan



If you are experiencing crisis or distress and are looking for support, please contact the following:

Child, Youth and Family Crisis Line of Eastern Ontario

Provides professional help in English and French for children, youth, and families in crisis. Available 24/7.

(613) 260-2360

Kids Help Phone

Provides support in English and French for youth under the age of 20. Available 24/7.

1-800-668-6668

Ontario Poison Centre

Provides medical information about poisoning in English and French from registered nurses and pharmacists. Please call 9-1-1 if a poisoning victim is not breathing or having a seizure. Available 24/7.

1-800-268-9017

