



**MUSIC
THERAPY FOR
PTSD AND
ADDICTIONS**

MUSIC FOR HEALING



Indigenous cultures around the world have been using music for healing for centuries.

WHAT IS MUSIC THERAPY?

Music therapy is a discipline in which Certified Music Therapists (MTAs) use music purposefully within therapeutic relationships to support development, health, and well-being. Music therapists use music safely and ethically to address human needs within cognitive, communicative, emotional, musical, physical, social, and spiritual domains.

**Canadian Association of Music Therapists
September 2020**

EQUITY AND DIVERSITY EFFORTS IN MUSIC THERAPY

CAMT- Equity and Diversity Committee

CAMT- Board of Directors EDI Chair

National and Provincial Conference with panels on EDI

EDI PERSONAL EFFORTS

Helped Develop Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging in Music Therapy Survey: Distributed October 2022

Anti-Oppressive practice: recognize power imbalance and work towards balance of power, recognize all forms of oppression are connected

Use everyday language, Be humble

Read/Educate myself on race/culture/white supremacy/anti oppressive practices

Develop sessions around non-white voices

In Addictions: focus on Emotion vs. Behaviour, institutional thinking

ORIGINS – WW2



In 1945: US military officially integrated music into its reconditioning program outlining orders for the use of music with military personnel and thereby marking the beginnings of the modern music therapy profession

TRAINING

Certified Music Therapists:

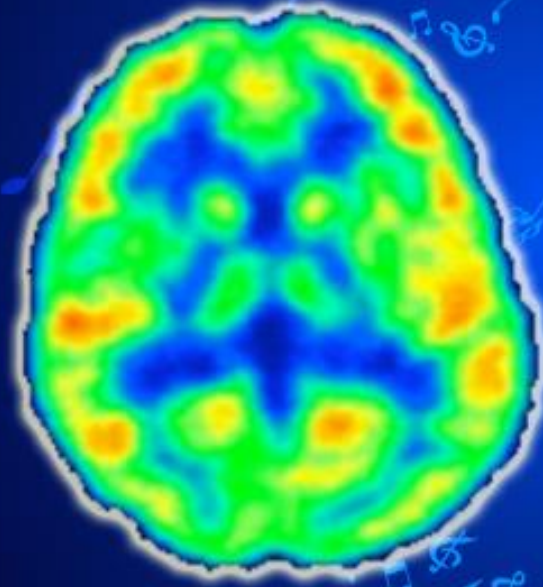
- Completion of a Bachelors or Masters degree in Music Therapy Completion of a 1000-hour supervised internship
- Play at least 2 instruments with vocal accompaniment
- Continuing Education Credits
- Code of ethics
- Standard of practice

Specific Trainings:

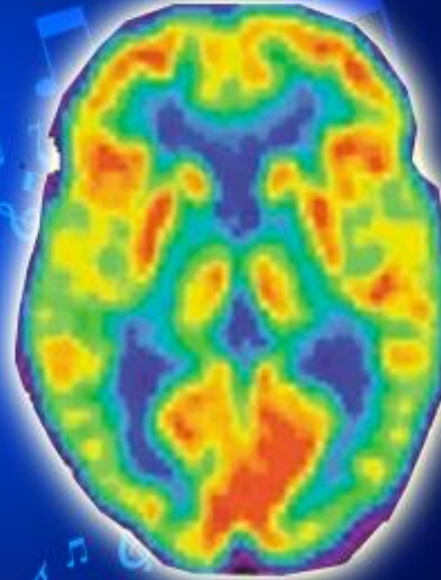
- Guided Imagery and Music
- Vocal Psychotherapy
- Neurologic Music Therapy

THE BRAINS REACTION TO MUSIC

The Brain
at Rest



The Brain's
Reaction to Music



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)



Your Brain On Music

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



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.

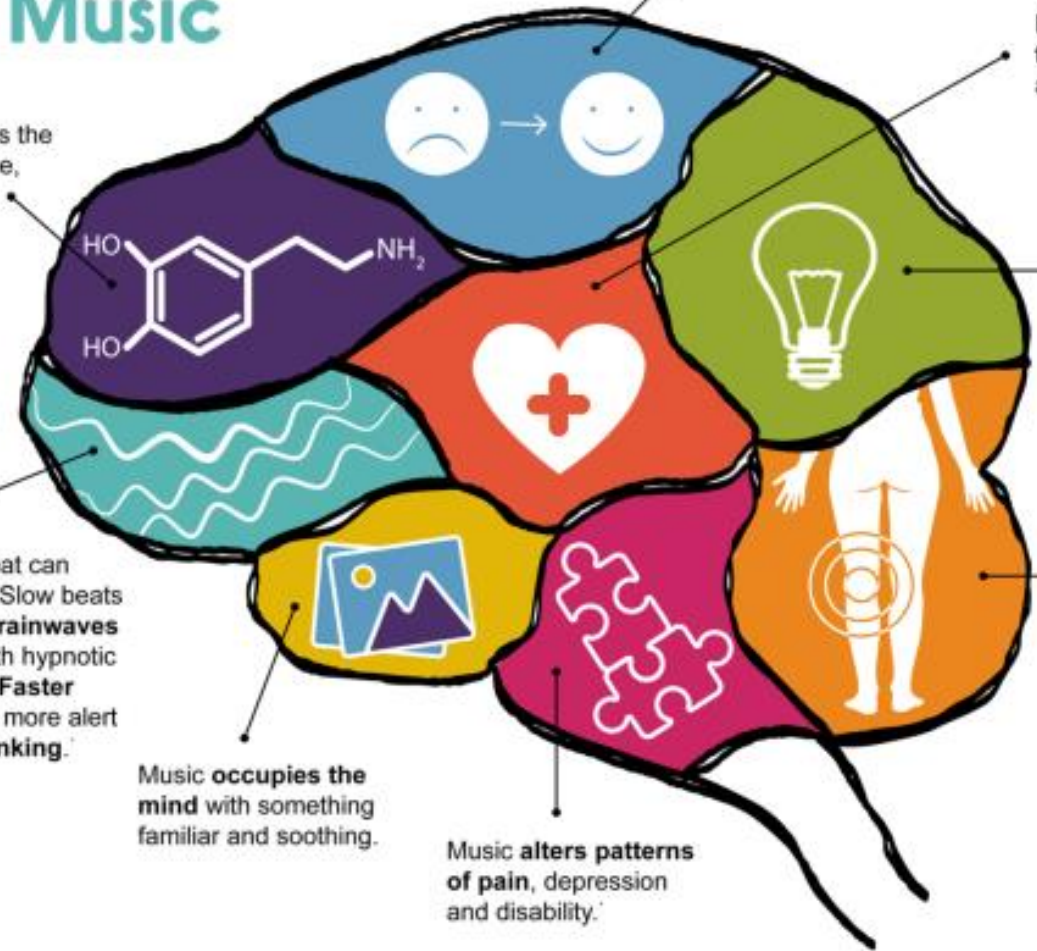
Music also has the power to **improve your state of mind**. This helps keep things like depression and anxiety at bay.

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

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.



PEOPLE WITH PTSD AND ADDICTIONS MIGHT STRUGGLE WITH:

Avoid people/places/things

Socially isolate

Hyper Vigilance

Tense Body

Hard to connecting to emotions

Body might be dysregulated from using (drug of choice)

Might Struggle with shame/guilt

HOW DOES MUSIC THERAPY HELP?

Avoidance: **Stimulate cognition, emotional expression and reminiscence**

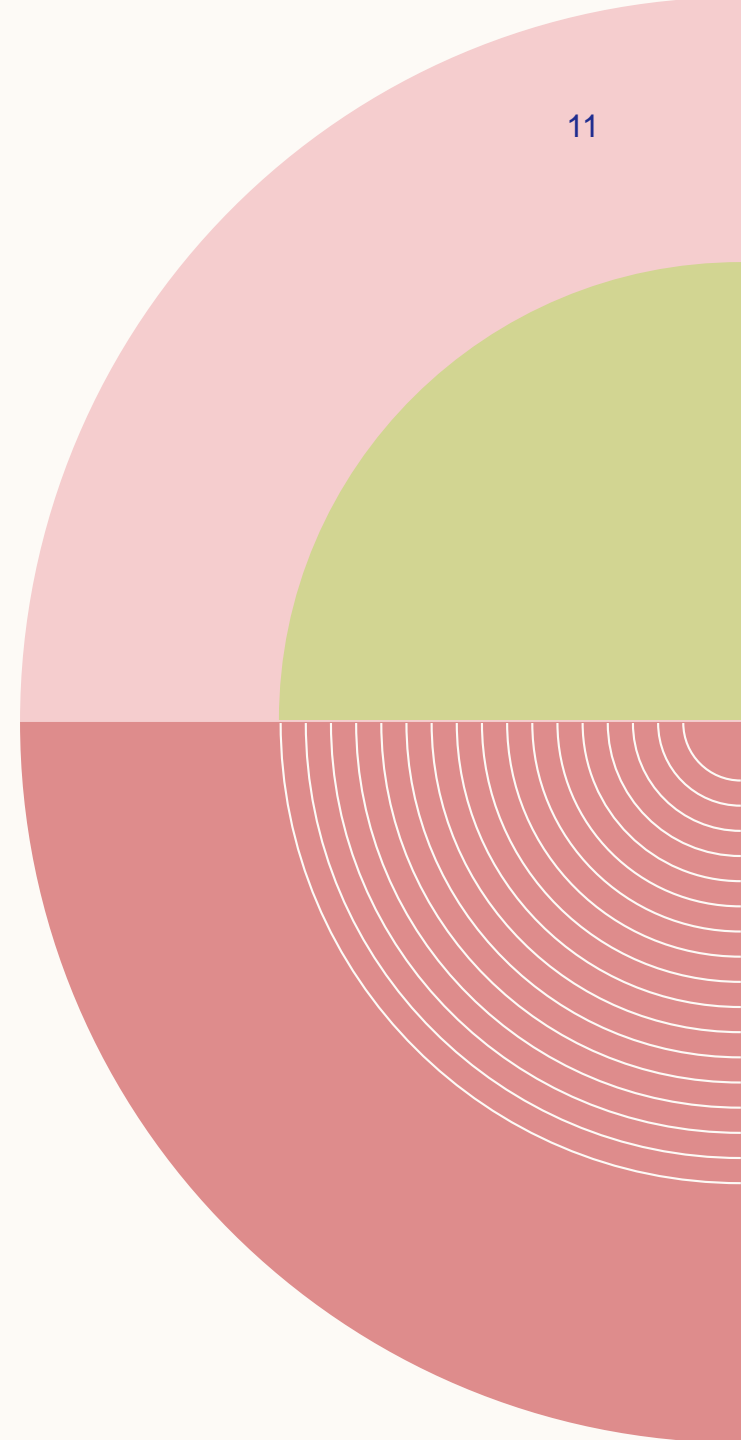
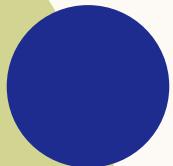
Socially isolate: **Fosters social connection through non-verbal means**

Hyper Vigilance: **Reduces anxiety, helps calm our body, regulate**

Tense Body: **Music helps to relax/Connect to our body**

Hard to connecting to emotions: **Song can act as container for our emotions**

Might Struggle with shame/guilt: **Music can be used to foster coping skills, such as breathing, mantras, kindness meditations**



HOW CAN MUSIC THERAPY HELP?

Receptive: Providing live or recorded music to promote emotional expression

Re-creative: Vocal singing has health benefits such as reduced anxiety, pain and enhanced mood

Group drumming has health benefits such as reduced anxiety, reduced anger and cathartic release

Improvisation: Providing opportunities for the client to express their emotions using voice or rhythm or melodic instruments; fostering creativity through non-verbal expression

Composition/Creativity: Lyric analysis, Song writing

Specific Trainings:

- Guided Imagery and Music
- Vocal Psychotherapy
- Neurologic Music Therapy

PERSONAL PLAYLIST

Name a song that comforts you

What emotions does it bring up for you?

Do you notice anything about its tempo, how fast or how slow? The music itself

How does your body respond to it?

If this song could give you a message what would it be?

When would be helpful to listen to it?

REFERENCES

Canadian Association of Music Therapy: musictherapy.ca

Article: How music therapy has helped the military

[How Music Therapy Has Helped the Military | Incadence Music Therapy Blog](#)

Canadian Journal of Music Therapy:

[Cjmt-rcm.musictherapy.ca](http://cjmt-rcm.musictherapy.ca)

[Anti-Oppressive_Practice_Resource_Guide.pdf](#)

[Canadian Journal of Music Therapy](#)



THANK YOU

Sarah Bell, MTA, RCT-C

sbell@ehncanada.com