



Music for Care

The Place of Music in our Lives

The ability to hear is the first of the senses that we develop in the womb and is complete when we are born. It is also something most of us will have at the end of our lives. As a lentil sized 2-month-old embryo the ears start to form, the auditory system itself develops later when a foetus is between 18 weeks and 6 months. From 6 months onwards, the baby will start to hear low level sounds. Through scans and ultrasound technology we see that babies do indeed respond to voices and noises outside of their mother's body from 6 months onwards, turning their heads towards sounds.

For most, this early capability means the neural pathways in the brain are well-established. Listening to music progresses this capability, criss-crossing both left and right hemispheres our responses are strongly embedded for our lifetime, through multiple elements and layering of tones, rhythms, structure, lyrics and styles, further cemented if we play instruments or read music. Different types of sound stimulate the brain to release hormones and elicit our feelings. We often experience strong memory associations with music so on listening to something again it can return us to the time and emotions felt on previous hearings.

Those who are deaf can also benefit from music being made accessible. Below is a link to the national charity 'Music & the Deaf' who have pushed the boundaries of what people might expect, enabling tens of thousands with hearing loss to enjoy music.

Music and Our Health

There are many connections to music and health services throughout human history. Ancient Greek doctors prescribed music for health, believing it could cure our bodies and souls. Many cultures have used music for healing. The music therapy profession has its origins in the First World War where music was used to soothe and support the injured. Veterans improvements led hospitals to request or employ musicians to help, training courses then followed. Hospital Radio was established quickly after the invention of the wireless.

Every part of the brain, including the brain stem, which doesn't respond to language, responds to music. The grey matter, which is the outer layer of the brain that contains the synapses – the ends of the neurones where signals are relayed – thickens with musical training. The cerebellum, which is the wrinkly bulb at the back of the brain that's crucial for balance, movement and motor control, is bigger in pianists.

<https://www.sciencefocus.com/the-human-body/the-power-of-music-for-health/>

The first time of testing dopamine, the brains feel-good chemical, and music, researchers from Montreal's McGill University, found in 2011 that music releases dopamine at moments of peak enjoyment. Dopamine was up to levels of 9% higher when volunteers listened to music that they enjoyed. This has provided the physiological evidence for the link between music and mental wellbeing. Science also shows music stimulates the body's other natural uplifting hormones of endorphins and oxytocin.

Music is also used for a wide variety of physical health benefits like singing to improve lung capacity, alleviating pain. Stroke patients are often given musical recordings to improve linguistic recovery. Studies also show how applying music can assist people coping with Parkinson's to learn to walk more easily by using rhythms to assist their gait.

How could carers and loved ones benefit from adding music?

- Music can act as a social mediator when language or voice is diminished. It can be something enjoyed together or individually.
- It could be used as a prompt e.g. energising music to help wake-up in the morning or before an appointment. Winding-down music in the evening. Playing special tunes on celebration days.
- Music can be used to actively acknowledge, change or set the atmosphere.
- Putting on music at mealtimes can support people to feel more at ease, helping muscles to relax, including those of the face, jaw and throat areas. Consider a background soundtrack whilst dealing with eating.
- Music can help us to control our feelings providing a way for expression or altering our mood.
- It can also be used for reducing the stress of caring – use a favourite song as a pick-me-up, sing to lift your spirits, whistle or hum as you go... Hi Ho!
- Music can also provide a distraction for distress, for example when having care or medical procedures, or waiting for news or test results.
- Music is portable through headphones, on iPods, being played in cars and so on, meaning of course you can take it anywhere you might feel it could be useful.
- Music can be enjoyed indoors, many big events are streamed online, can be listened to on radio or are shown on television such as Glastonbury, the MOBO Awards, the Proms, Young Musician of the Year, competitions like The Rap Game UK, The Voice etc.
- Music can be something to go out to if able, like live events, concerts, festivals or shows.

Tickets are often reduced or free for carers with disabled parking pre-bookable. PSPA can support you in obtaining tickets for some concerts such as the Friendship Matinees held yearly at the Royal Albert Hall in London

<https://www.royalalberthall.com/search/?q=friendship+matinees>

Resources

NHS

Music as a powerful connector: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/blog/music-and-dementia-a-powerful-connector/>

Music and health <https://www.england.nhs.uk/blog/mel-ive/>

MUSIC AND THE DEAF

Based in Renishaw, Sheffield, Music & the Deaf are the national charity supporting people with all levels of hearing loss to enjoy music.

Music and the Deaf is led by CEO Danny Lane, himself a profoundly deaf musician and pianist. They are called upon as experts by educational organisations, charities, companies and initiatives all over the world. They believe that being able to participate in music greatly assists in a person's social, emotional and intellectual development, regardless of their level of hearing. They have built an international reputation for pushing the boundaries of what deaf people can aspire to and achieve in music.

Website www.matd.org.uk E-mail info@matd.org.uk

PLAYLIST FOR LIFE

Helps you to create a personally meaningful playlist for your loved one, supporting you through 3 easy steps to create a playlist. Free resources to help to find the pieces of music or songs you are looking for.

Evidence shows that we make more memories between the ages of 10 and 30 than at any other time in our lives: a period which is known as the 'Memory Bump.' When building playlists for yourself or person living with dementia, the 'Memory Bump' is a great place to start.

One day each year there is a UK wide celebration, National Playlist Day. Why not join the celebration <https://www.playlistforlife.org.uk/national-playlist-day/>

Website: www.playlistforlife.org.uk

MUSIC IN HOSPITALS & CARE

With the aim of providing joy through live music to people receiving health and social care services, Music in Hospitals & Care is a charity that provide concerts, events and support across the UK.

Website: www.mihc.org.uk

BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR MUSIC THERAPY

Enables you to search for qualified music therapists in your area and provides a great selection of links to other resources and organisations such as the 'Heavy Metal Therapy Website' <https://www.bamt.org/resources/service-user-resources>

Website www.bamt.org/

BOOKS

MUSICOPHILIA – Dr. Oliver Sacks, Neurologist

In Musicophilia, Oliver Sacks examines the powers of music through the individual experiences of patients, musicians and everyday people - those struck by affliction, unusual talent and even, in one case, by lightning - to show not only that music occupies more areas of our brain than language does, but also that it can torment, calm, organise and heal. Always wise and compellingly readable, these stories alter our conception of who we are and how we function, and show us an essential part of what it is to be human.

Available in paperback, audio and for kindles.

LATEST PODCASTS & RADIO SHOWS

BBC 3 Music Matters – Music & Mental Health

With Kate Molleson

Kate Molleson surveys the musical world's responses to mental wellbeing. Opera star Renée Fleming talks about her 'Music and Mind Live' webinar series, which explores the impact of music on human health and the brain. Kate is also joined by the author, musician and neuroscientist Daniel J. Levitin who will also feature in the webinar series. The composer Nigel Osborne introduces his X-System, which examines how the brain and body respond to music, and the Irish accordionist and psychologist Cormac Begley shares his thoughts about music and mood. Reflecting on life during lockdown, Music Matters also hears from the performance poet Michael Pedersen, the cellist Zoe Martlew, and trumpeter Martin Hurrell.

[Music Matters - Music and mental health - BBC Sounds](#) (45 minutes)

BBC 1 The One Show – Men, Music & Mental Health

Musicians Craig David, James Arthur, Professor Green and Gary Lightbody talk about their experiences of mental health.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p08dyrcg> (4 minutes)

BBC Proms Plus – Music & Health

Naomi Paxton discusses the latest science and clinical practice with psychologist Dr Daisy Fancourt and Dr Simon Opher, a GP in Gloucestershire

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p07hp84t> (35 minutes)

Some Music Quotes

“Music produces a kind of pleasure which human nature cannot do without” – Confucius

“Music is the divine way to tell beautiful, poetic things to the heart” – Pablo Casals

“Music acts like a magic key, to which the most tightly closed heart opens” – Maria von Trapp

“Music is the literature of the heart; it commences where speech ends” – Alphonse de Lamartine

“Music is the language of the spirit. It opens the secret of life bringing peace, abolishing strife.”

– Kahlil Gibran

“Music binds us in a way that language rarely does” – Alan Harvey

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