# How Music Therapy Can Help Mental Health

Music therapy is a type of therapy that uses music to achieve goals in therapy. A music therapy therapist will use music to help a client express emotions or communicate differently. This type of therapy can be used to treat many different illnesses and can be applied differently depending on the person’s specific circumstances.

## How Does Music Therapy Work?

Music therapy [helps](https://www.nami.org/people/music-therapy-more-than-just-entertainment/) to work through physical, emotional, cognitive, and social aspects of a person’s life. A licensed music therapist will use their skills (and the client’s insight) to identify what areas of the person’s life they want to work through. After they come up with this plan, they will assign practices to complete in sessions that will help the person work through their treatment. Some of these practices include:

* **Writing music:** With this practice, a client and therapist will work together to create music. Through the process of creating a musical piece, the therapist will help the client to focus on their goals and symptoms.
* **Listening to music:** Clients and therapists can use listening to music to work through the client’s goals. The therapist will choose specific music that they feel might help their client express emotions that might be helpful for their treatment goals. Listening to music also helps to affect certain parts of the brain. When someone is listening to music, their brain [releases dopamine](https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6397525/#:~:text=In%20this%20regard,%20dopamine%20releases,%E2%80%9D%20(12,%2021).). In addition to this, the [levels of cortisol](https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9480195/) in someone’s brain decrease when listening to music. Lower levels of cortisol can be tied to reduced stress. Because of this, music can be used as a relaxation technique in therapy sessions.
* **Improvising:** Improvising in music therapy is a process where a client and therapist create music together in the session. Using [improvisation](https://psywb.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s13612-014-0020-9) in music therapy helps to improve communication and help clients express their emotions. This method can also help clients work through difficult situations that they might not always feel comfortable talking about.
* **Analyzing music:** The process of analyzing music can be used in music therapy to help clients explore their emotions, identify problems in their lives, and identify their values. Lyrics can hold a lot of meaning and can be used to help clients work through different problems. Lyrics about specific struggles can help clients to feel less alone.

Music therapy is an incredible way to heal and grow. This type of therapy can be helpful for someone who has had difficulty expressing their feelings in talk therapy or in general. Music therapy can also be helpful for people who have strong ties to the art of music. The goal of music therapy is to enhance a person’s well-being and improve a person’s mental health. Music therapy has been shown to relieve symptoms in people experiencing anxiety and depression. It can be a promising tool for people who have a more difficult time expressing themself in traditional ways.

If you are interested in starting therapy today, [reach out to us today](https://michiganpsychologicalcare.com/contact.php).

**References**

<https://www.nami.org/people/music-therapy-more-than-just-entertainment/>

[https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6397525](https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6397525/#:~:text=In%20this%20regard,%20dopamine%20releases,%E2%80%9D%20(12,%2021))

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