



## Music Therapy for Adults with Mental Health and Substance Use Conditions

### ADULTS WITH MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE CONDITIONS

*Mental health* can be defined as the state of well-being wherein an individual realizes their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively, and is able to make a contribution to their community (World Health Organization, 2013).

*Mental illness* is a condition that disrupts a person's thinking, feeling, mood, behavior, daily functioning, and ability to relate to others (NAMI, 2019) and may be associated with significant distress or disability in social, occupational, academic, or other important activities (APA DSM-5, 2013).

Approximately one in five adults in the U.S. experience a mental health condition while one in 22 has a serious mental illness like schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or major depressive disorder (SAMSHA, 2019). About 9.2 million adults in the U.S. experience both a mental illness and substance use disorder concurrently (i.e., dual diagnosis) (SAMSHA, 2019).

*Substance use disorder* occurs when the recurrent use of drugs (e.g., alcohol, illicit drugs, medications) causes clinically significant impairment in cognition, behavior, and physiology that can include impaired control, social impairment, and dangerous behaviors associated with use (APA DSM-5, 2013).

Mental health and substance use conditions may affect anyone and can result from a combination of biological, social, psychological, and cultural factors. These conditions may develop and reoccur in response to stressful events (APA DSM-5, 2013; SAMSHA, 2019).

### FACTS ABOUT MUSIC THERAPY FOR ADULTS WITH MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE CONDITIONS

According to the American Music Therapy Association (AMTA) Member Survey and Workforce Analysis (2018), approximately 19% of music therapists reported working with people with mental health and substance use conditions.

Board-certified music therapists (MT-BC) may, but are not limited to, work within the following mental health settings:

- ◆ psychiatric inpatient, outpatient, or partial hospitalization
- ◆ forensic or correctional settings

#### MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS (DSM-5, 2013) THAT MUSIC THERAPISTS TREAT CAN INCLUDE (BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO):

- Schizophrenia spectrum and other psychotic disorders
- Bipolar and related disorders
- Depressive disorders
- Anxiety disorders
- Substance-related and addictive disorders
- Trauma- and stressor-related disorders
- Feeding and eating disorders
- Personality disorders



- ◆ hospital, medical, residential, or community settings
- ◆ detoxification, rehabilitation, relapse prevention, or dual diagnosis settings (Eyre & Lee, 2015; Murphy, 2013; Silverman, 2015).

## **MUSIC THERAPY FOR ADULTS WITH MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE CONDITIONS IS:**

- ◆ The specialized use of music to restore, maintain, and improve cognitive, emotional, social, communicative, and physiological functioning (AMTA, 2015).
- ◆ The use of goal-directed music interventions focused on symptom management, fostering relationships with peers and therapists, and providing psychosocial support and education to augment hope, meaning, purpose, and recovery (Carr, Odell-Miller, & Priebe, 2013; Silverman, 2015).

## **PURPOSES OF MUSIC THERAPY**

Music therapy interventions may:

- ◆ Improve depressive symptoms, decrease anxiety, and improve functioning for people with a variety of mental health conditions (Aalbers et al., 2017; Hohmann, Bradt, Stegemann, & Koelsch, 2017; Geretsegger et al., 2017)
- ◆ Improve emotional expression, group interaction, development of skills, and quality of life for people with substance use conditions (Hohmann, et al., 2017)
- ◆ Improve therapeutic alliance, treatment eagerness, coping skills, locus of control, change readiness, and craving in adults with substance use conditions (Silverman, 2015)
- ◆ Address loneliness, grief, loss, and stigma that persist despite treatment (Jackson, 2015).

## **CONSIDERATIONS AND POTENTIAL CONTRAINDICATIONS FOR MUSIC THERAPY IN MENTAL HEALTH**

- ◆ Be attentive to changes in individual's behavior by pacing and sequencing music experiences based on mood, affect, and energy level (Murphy, 2013)
- ◆ Be aware of psychotropic medication side effects (e.g., dizziness, dry mouth, blurred vision, muscle rigidity) and how these may affect client responses (Silverman, 2015)

## **MUSIC THERAPY CLINICAL PROCESS**

**Assessment.** Assessment is the “process of determining the client’s present level of functioning” (AMTA, 2015) and may be formal or informal, with purposes and approaches varying across settings (Lipe, 2015). Music therapists may use a variety of assessment tools or intake forms to identify client’s strengths and needs in physical, psychological, social, and musical functioning (Spiro, Tsisis, & Cripps, 2017).

**Treatment planning.** Music therapists prepare a treatment program plan based on the assessment, client prognosis, and relevant information from other disciplines and sources (AMTA, 2015). Music therapists provide group and individual sessions weekly, or daily as determined by therapeutic need, treatment facility, and program schedule (Eyre, 2015; Murphy, 2013).



**Implementation.** Music therapists can provide goal-directed music experiences using a variety of methods such as improvising, composing, re-creating, and listening (Bruscia, 2014; Eyre, 2013). Services are based on the assessment and treatment plan (AMTA, 2015).

**Evaluation.** Music therapists evaluate, and if appropriate, modify the program plan based on a review of the individual's current status and progress towards their treatment goals (AMTA, 2015).

## EFFECTIVENESS RESEARCH

- ◆ When added to standard care, music therapy can improve the global state, mental state, social functioning, and quality of life of people with schizophrenia or schizophrenia-like disorders (Geretsegger et al., 2017).
- ◆ Music therapy can decrease anxiety and improve depressive symptoms and functioning of people with depression compared to treatment as usual (Aalbers et al., 2017).
- ◆ Music therapy can result in beneficial outcomes on emotion, motivation, participation, locus of control, and perceived helpfulness for adults with substance use disorders (Hohmann et al., 2017)
- ◆ Music therapy has a strong positive effect in enhancing contemplation, treatment readiness, motivation, and cravings in addiction treatment (Megranahan & Lynskey, 2017).
- ◆ Single music therapy sessions can be as effective as single verbal therapy sessions for various psychological outcomes with higher music therapy scores for comfort, therapist-rated working alliance, and change readiness for adults with substance use conditions (Hohmann et al., 2017).

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### **What is AMTA?**

The American Music Therapy Association (AMTA) represents 10,000 music therapists, corporate members, and related associations worldwide. AMTA is committed to the advancement of education, training, professional standards, and research in support of the music therapy profession. AMTA establishes criteria for the education and clinical training of music therapists. Professional members of AMTA adhere to a Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice in the delivery of music therapy services. AMTA's mission is to advance public knowledge of music therapy benefits and increase access to quality music therapy services. Learn more at [www.musictherapy.org](http://www.musictherapy.org).

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