

SOUNDING HEALTH & COMMUNITY



Music Therapy in Residential Aged Care

What is Music Therapy?

Music therapy is the intentional use of evidence-based music interventions by a Registered Music Therapist (RMT) to address health, functioning and well-being.

It is an adaptive, person-centred allied health practice that embeds the strengths, needs, and goals of clients at the core of care planning.



Music therapy encompasses a range of validated techniques such as:

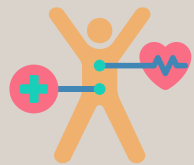
- Singing
- Structured and free instrumental play
- Learning or relearning to play an instrument of choice
- Songwriting
- Performing music for others
- Music-supported physical exercise
- Listening to music that is meaningful
- Music-based mindfulness and relaxation

People do not need to have previous musical experience to benefit from music therapy.

Where Music Therapy Helps in Residential Aged Care



Music therapy can support healthy older adults and older adults living with a neurological and/or mental health condition, or recovering from stroke.



Physical Function

Music-supported exercise can enhance physical function. It also supports movement rehabilitation after a stroke. Singing can help with voice rehabilitation for people affected by Parkinson's disease.



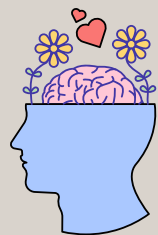
Cognition

Active music-making and listening provides cognitive stimulation. Musical activities can target specific areas of executive function. Singing can aid rehabilitation of speech following stroke.



Social Well-Being

Music therapy involves interactive processes that can help reduce isolation and loneliness.



Psychological Health

Music therapy enables self-expression, enhances mood, and boosts confidence and self-esteem. Psychological issues are addressed through verbal and non-verbal processes, and supports the development of skills for self-care and managing distress.



Music therapy can complement and collaborate with other health professions.

What Music Therapy Looks Like in Residential Aged Care

1 Referral

Nurses, Leisure & Lifestyle officers, or Allied Health Practitioners refers resident(s) to Music Therapy using a form provided by the RMT.
(See sample on next page.)

2 Group / Individual Engagement

GROUP

Individual assessments will be conducted prior to group therapy.

Residents will participate in music therapy activities to address their goals within a social setting.

Groups can be tailored to specific therapeutic aims (e.g. speech rehabilitation for residents with Parkinson's disease).

INDIVIDUAL

Residents will participate music therapy activities to address their goals in a one-on-one setting.

Clinical assessment will be conducted in the first session.

Individual sessions are generally more suitable for resident with high care needs or severe mobility issues.

3 Review

Clinical review will be conducted at the end of the referral period. Outcomes will be discussed with the referring professional to determine whether to continue or discharge.

Sample Music Therapy Referral Form:

Date:

Referrer:

Job Title:

Resident Name:

Room No.:

Medical History:

Referral Reason:

Type of Session:

Group

Individual

Referral Period:

One-Off

4w

6w

8w

12w

Ongoing

Other therapies:

Comments:

About the RMT

Geena Cheung

Geena is a passionate and resourceful Registered Music Therapist dedicated to empowering clients to thrive.

Since graduating with a Master of Creative Music Therapy (Distinction) from Western Sydney University in 2017, she has focussed her practice on supporting older adults in residential and community aged care contexts.

Geena employs a strengths-based and collaborative framework to music therapy. Embracing challenges and innovation is at the heart of her approach, enabling her to respond effectively to clients' needs. This has seen her:

- Lead a songwriting and choir performance project at an aged care home,
- Adapt traditional instruments to match the ability of clients and therapeutic purpose,
- Learn and incorporate music appropriate to the cultural backgrounds of clients, and
- Design rhythm-based activities to cognitively stimulate people living with dementia.

Geena was a finalist in the 'Music Therapist of the Year' category of the Australian Allied Health Awards in 2022. She recently completed a Diploma in Dementia Care at University of Tasmania and attended Neurologic Music Therapy training in 2020.



Contact

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