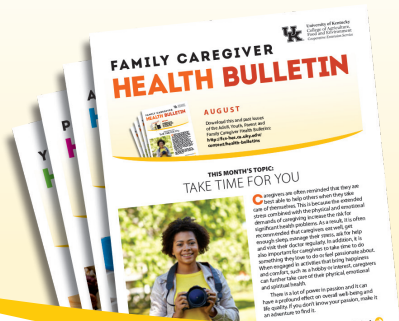




University of Kentucky
College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment
Cooperative Extension Service

FAMILY CAREGIVER HEALTH BULLETIN



JUNE 2022

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

THE POWER OF MUSIC



Music therapy uses music to address physical, emotional, cognitive, and social needs. It can be done with individuals or in groups. Music therapy is appropriate for people of all ages and abilities. People who are healthy or those who struggle with illness can benefit from music. Performed in a variety of settings, including health care and education, music therapists help people who are dealing with illness, grief, anxiety, depression, loneliness, and addiction. Music therapists work with people who have rehabilitative needs after illnesses, accidents, and injuries. They work with people living with chronic conditions such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease. They work with children in hospitals and patients

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Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notification.

Listening to music can boost your mood, decrease fatigue, reduce anxiety, manage pain, and help you process emotions.

➔ Continued from page 1

receiving hospice care. Regardless of individual musical ability, rhythm, or beat, music has the power to affect the mind, body, and soul (Tams, 2020).

According to board certified music therapist, Erin Batkiewicz, from the Wellness Music Therapy Center in Lexington, music therapists use music with intention to help people cope and improve life quality. Therapeutic activities, such as listening to melodies, writing songs, playing instruments, drumming, and guided imagery encourage self-expression and engagement. Music has a lot of other benefits (Batkiewicz, 2022; Heidersheit, 2016):

- **Combats stress.** Music helps control hormones related to stress in the body, such as cortisol. Music helps us combat cognitive overload because it regulates the nervous system and grounds us into the present moment.
- **Reduces anxiety.** When you listen to something calm, music has a physiological effect. It can slow the body's rhythm by decreasing blood pressure, reducing heart rate, and slowing down respiration. Music can help you relax.
- **Influences behavior.** Music can also raise blood pressure and create excitement and endurance. For example, fast music can make you feel more alert and may help you concentrate better. Upbeat music influences positivity and optimism. Slower music can be relaxing and soothing. Music releases neurotransmitters associated with pleasure and well-being. As a result, music can boost self-esteem and improve mood.
- **Serves as a catalyst for expression.** Personal music preferences can provide a distraction for the mind and even trigger various emotions — from sadness and grief to relaxation or elation. As a form of expression, music provides a safe and familiar place for people.
- **Creates connections.** Music can connect you to or remind you of people you care about or love and times in your life you value. Music also connects you to yourself as it can make your soul feel alive and your heart happy. Music can be spiritual.

Simply listening to music provides the brain with a mental workout. It can boost mood, decrease fatigue, reduce anxiety, manage pain, enhance performance, strengthen heart health, and help you process emotions (Stanborough, 2020). But reading, singing, or playing an instrument is like your brain running sprints according to Batkiewicz. Some research even supports that a lifetime of music playing may reduce the risk of cognitive impairment and dementia (Walsh et al., 2021).

The power of music improves physical, mental, and emotional health. It touches a wide range of individuals while also having a powerful way to unite us (think about the National Anthem, hymns at church, love songs during a courtship, baby lullabies). People can access music for free or for a relatively low cost. Music therapists also specialize in expressing versus suppressing emotion through music. The next time you are needing to escape negative cognitive or emotional overload, turn to music.

SOURCES:

Amy F. Kostelic, Associate Extension Professor for Adult Development and Aging; Erin Batkiewicz, MT-BC, MM, Wellness Music Therapy Center

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Written by: Amy F. Kostelic, Ph.D.
Edited by: Alyssa Simms
Designed by: Rusty Manseau
Stock images: 123RF.com

