



Penny Brohn UK
Living Well with Cancer

Therapies

Acupuncture | Art Therapy | Counselling | Healing Imagery | Massage | Meditation and Mindfulness
Music Therapy | Nordic Walking | Physical Activity
Qigong | Reflexology | Relaxation | Shiatsu | Yoga



Music therapy involves using a range of accessible musical instruments or listening to music in a relaxed state. This is led by a professionally trained therapist. No musical ability is needed to benefit from music therapy.

Music therapy aims to improve psychological and physical health through emotional expression, relaxation and support.

Recent research suggests that music therapy may ease symptoms of anxiety and pain before, during and after cancer treatment. People have also reported that music therapy provides helpful social and emotional support.

Information on music therapy

This evidence-based information sheet aims to provide clearly sourced and reliable information to help you make informed choices about music therapy, one of a range of complementary therapies available to support people with cancer. If you would like more information on how to access the range of services Penny Brohn UK provides, please contact our Helpline on 0303 3000 118. We are able to provide our services free of charge, thanks to the charitable donations and voluntary contributions which fund our work.

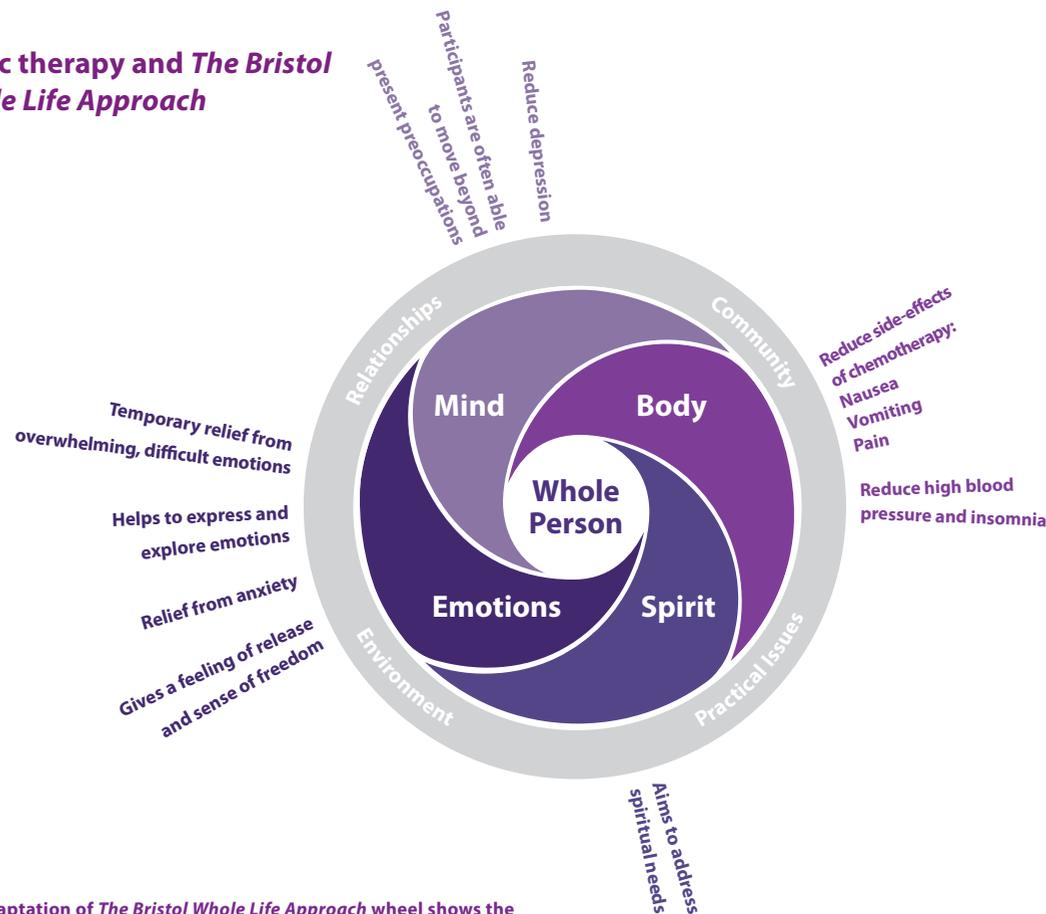
What do people who have tried music therapy say about it?

Research studies known as qualitative studies ask people about their experiences. They can provide information from a personal perspective, but can't tell us if a therapy is likely to work for everyone.

In one small study, people with advanced cancer reported that music therapy with a Body Tambura (a stringed instrument) led to feelings of relaxation, and positive body sensations and visualisations.

Reported benefits from other studies include reduced feelings of isolation, themes around spirituality and healing, and increased confidence.

Music therapy and The Bristol Whole Life Approach



This adaptation of The Bristol Whole Life Approach wheel shows the areas that music therapy can help with, according to providers.
(Please note that these are not the claims of Penny Brohn UK.)

What happens in a music therapy session?

- Each music therapy session is unique, as therapists aim to respond to the needs of clients. The therapist aims to take into account your music tastes and cultural background. No previous musical abilities are needed or expected.
- Group sessions use a wide variety of accessible musical instruments for the spontaneous creation of music, using different rhythms or simple melody patterns. This allows people to express their emotions in a creative way.
- Guided Imagery and Music (GIM) is a specialised branch of music therapy, offered by therapists who have undergone additional training.

- GIM involves listening to specially created programmes of music in a deeply relaxed state. The music and instructions from the therapist help evoke symbols, feelings, images, insights or memories.
- After listening to the music, the therapist helps the client to make connections between the 'images' and the client's life. They explore their significance and potential meaning.

More about music therapy

Music therapy uses music and sound to support and develop physical, mental, social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. It is often used to help people express themselves emotionally and may be used to reduce or distract from symptoms such as pain, nausea, anxiety, insomnia or depression.

Music plays an important role in all cultures and was recognised as a healing tool for body and soul by the ancient Greek civilization. Modern music therapy has its roots in the mid 20th century. During the Second World War, musicians visited war veterans in US hospitals to help those recovering from shellshock. In the UK, music therapy underwent substantial development in the late 1960s and 1970s, which led to professional training courses for therapists, with a wide variety of clients. Music therapy may take place one-to-one with a therapist or as a group activity.

Music therapy is distinct from something called music medicine. Music therapy involves a therapeutic process and engagement with a qualified music therapist. Music medicine involves listening to pre-recorded music offered by healthcare personnel. The distinction between these practices is not always clear, particularly in the research looking at the effectiveness of music interventions.

Is music therapy safe?

Music therapy is generally considered safe when carried out by a professionally trained music therapist. The music should not exceed 85 decibels.

Are there any legal issues?

Only professionally trained music therapists from approved postgraduate courses are legally able to practise music therapy. All trained therapists are registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

What is the evidence on music therapy?

A growing body of research evidence is finding positive support for music therapy. The most consistent findings are for improvements in anxiety and pain before, during and after cancer treatment.

A full list of references and an extended summary of the research literature is available upon request from our Helpline.

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Statement

Our information and research is designed to help you make informed choices about the services that we provide. From time to time, for illustrative purposes, we may make reference to commonly available products (such as relaxation CDs and popular self-help books). We do not endorse or advertise the use of any specific product.

Disclaimer:

While we make every effort to use up-to-date and reliable sources, we cannot accept liability for errors in the sources that we use and also cannot guarantee to find all the information relevant to your enquiry or request. All responsibility for interpretation of and action upon that information rests with you. This information and advice is offered on the understanding that if you intend to support your treatment with complementary or alternative approaches, then it is advisable to consult your medical team to ensure that they have a complete understanding of your situation and the complementary or alternative approach that you are considering.

Organisations that offer support and information for people with cancer

Cancer Research UK Tel: 0808 800 4040
www.cancerresearchuk.org

Macmillan Cancer Support Tel: 0808 808 0000
www.macmillan.org.uk

NHS 111 Tel: 111
www.nhs.uk

More information on complementary therapies

NHS Evidence www.evidence.nhs.uk
CAM Cancer www.cam-cancer.org/CAM-Summaries

Organisations that represent music therapy

British Association for Music Therapy

Tel: 020 7837 6100 | www.bamt.org

The Music Therapy Charity

www.musictherapy.org.uk

Health and Care Professions Council

Tel: 0845 300 6184 | www.hcpc-uk.co.uk