

Sessions can be delivered across various settings, including hospitals and palliative care, residential and nursing homes and other places where older adults may benefit from relational, music-based therapeutic support.

This service may support people who:

- Manage long-term chronic pain, including conditions such as fibromyalgia or arthritis.
- Oncology and Palliative Care Clients, relieving cancer-related pain and reducing reliance on opioids.
- Postoperative and Surgical Clients, focusing on alleviating surgical pain and easing anxiety.
- Paediatric and Procedural Clients, focusing on reducing anxiety and distraction during painful medical procedures (e.g. burn dressings, spinal taps).

Northern Ireland Music Therapy Trust is the leading music therapy charity in Northern Ireland and has wide experience of providing music therapy for anybody with with emotional and behavioural needs, mental health diagnoses, learning disabilities, pain management, addiction and rehabilitation and women's health. Music therapists are Allied Health Professionals and must be registered with the Health and Care Professions Council.

Contact us to find out more.



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Music Therapy For Pain Management

Music therapy can act as a powerful non-pharmacological tool in both acute and chronic care. It works by stimulating the brain's reward system, increasing dopamine, and distracting from discomfort, often lowering the need for pain medication.

Supporting comfort, regulation, and emotional wellbeing

The brain's neural networks for processing music heavily overlap with the networks that process pain. Music stimulates the release of dopamine, which acts as a natural pain reliever and mood booster. Music therapy sessions work on reducing anxiety which addresses the emotional and psychological components of pain, helping to alleviate the tension and agitation that often exacerbate physical discomfort.



In music therapy sessions, the therapist will help identify areas for development to achieve outcomes such as:



Reduced Pain Perception

Music therapy can help lower pain levels and decrease distress in individuals by directing attention away from the pain or anxiety through engaging the listener with music, either through familiar songs or instrumental play.

Anxiety and Stress Reduction

Engaging in shared musical activities with others encourages interaction which can lower stress and anxiety.

Active vs. Passive Engagement

While listening to music is effective, active music-making (playing instruments, singing) with a therapist can offer deeper emotional regulation and pain management.

“You are stronger than you seem, braver than you believe, don’t get lost in your pain.”

A therapeutic approach that supports the whole person

Pain is not only physical. It can affect mood, sleep, confidence, relationships, and the ability to feel calm or in control. Music therapy can support people emotionally and physically by creating a safe, engaging space where attention, expression, and regulation can shift.

