

Why is music magic?

BY CAROLINE GRECO
GUEST COLUMNIST

The healing power of music is known, understood and appreciated by nearly everyone.

Few people would disagree with the magic of music and its ability to uplift, soothe, connect and transform. However, when we talk about the therapeutic nature of music and learn more about what music therapy is, it's important to distinguish a key difference: within a music therapy context, music is used within a therapeutic relationship, involving both client and therapist, to address the needs of individuals.

Certainly, most of us have experienced moments where hearing certain songs, albums or artists at particular moments were majorly impactful in some way. Perhaps listening to live music in concert, playing live music vocally or instrumentally, or even listening to your favorite tunes through headphones, in your car, or in your home have been deeply meaningful or felt significantly transformative and therapeutic. However, it's



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On the left, Music Therapist Caroline Greco, LCAT, MT-BC, MS, is Program Director at The Greens at Greenwich.

important to note that while these moments fully and wholly represent the therapeutic nature of music, they do not represent an accurate depiction of what music therapy is.

Music Therapy is an established health profession in which music is used within a therapeutic relationship to address the physical, emotional, cognitive, social and spiritual needs of individuals. There are a wide variety of music interventions that fall under four main meth-

ods of music therapy: receptive (listening), improvisational, compositional and re-creative. Upon completing a bachelor's or master's degree in music therapy, music therapists are eligible to sit for the national board certification exam to obtain the credential MT-BC (Music Therapist - Board Certified), which is necessary for professional practice. Music therapists work with a range of populations, including but not limited to dementia care, special education, hospice care,

acquired brain injury, military service members and veterans, addiction treatment, medical care and behavioral health.

The extraordinary relationship between music and individuals with dementia is no secret. Countless research studies have shown that music lives in every single part of our brains. It's no wonder our brains are awakened, and we vividly come to life when engaging with our favorite songs and melodies. As a music therapist working with individuals with memory impairment, it is a gift to be able to witness this extraordinary relationship firsthand. Whether it's listening to an individual with aphasia musically express themselves through melodic harmonica playing, hearing a nonverbal client vocalize and

sing lyrical phrases with amazing clarity, or witnessing a group of individuals musically improvise and connect with each other and parts of themselves, the magic of music is never in question. For all of us, but even more so with individuals with dementia, music links us to our world and provides a pathway back to our past. To be a part of this link and be privy to a client's journey down this pathway is more rewarding, uplifting and beautiful than I could have ever imagined when first entering this remarkable field.

Music Therapist Caroline Greco, LCAT, MT-BC, MS, is Program Director at The Greens at Greenwich. For more information, visit thegreensatgreenwich.com or call 203-486-8642.



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