



EDITORIAL

HEALING HARMONIES

Within a few minutes of the Mother's lullaby the restless baby's eyelids begin to droop into a peaceful sleep! Every mother knows the magical power of music on the infant.

There are legends woven around the iconic ancient singer Tansen in India (16th century). People say lamps would light up with the power of his music, rains would pour from the skies, the wounds of the sick would heal and stones would shatter with his pitch!



The award winning movie 'The pianist' tells the story of a Polish Jew who survived the holocaust due to his playing the piano. It was only music that could transcend war and hatred and keep his soul alive.

Music (the arrangement of sound) has been an integral part of our lives, be it the social events or the religious ceremonies. It is not just a means for entertainment, the culture of music extends into various areas.

Music interacts with our brain, engages various brain parts, affects its function and thus promotes emotional well-being. When we add words to the music (lyrics), it creates more emotional connections and triggers memories.

Music therapy harnesses these emotional and physiological effects of music to improve well-being, healing the individuals with various needs. **It is an interpersonal process where a therapist uses all the facets of music to help the clients.** The therapy may be an Active music therapy (playing instruments, singing etc) which allows patients to express themselves creatively or Receptive music therapy that fosters relaxation, pain relief, and memory recall.

Beyond therapeutic applications, **music therapy also provides emotional support offering a means to process emotions non-verbally.** It is increasingly integrated into healthcare settings, helping reduce stress, boost immunity, and improve overall health.

Music therapy requires specialized training, as therapists need both musical expertise and an understanding of psychology and health. In India, institutes and associations like Indian Association of Music Therapy, Chennai School of Music Therapy, Sri Balaji Vidyapeeth Puducherry have been offering diploma, certification as well as post graduation courses for the last 10-15 years.

As technology advances, virtual reality and mobile apps are making music therapy more accessible, promising greater personalized treatment options in the future.

Ultimately, **music therapy is a powerful tool that blends science and art, fostering emotional, cognitive, and physical healing. Its versatility and impact make it an invaluable therapeutic practice, helping individuals improve their quality of life and navigate challenges.**

-Dr. Aabha Pimprikar
Co-Editor

ROTARY CLUB OF NAGPUR VISION

PRESIDENT JAISHREE CHHABRANI



President of RCNV Jaishree Chhabrani is Managing Director of Eminence Arts & Education. She is a homemaker, author, motivational speaker, theatre expert, soft skill trainer and a passionate podcaster. She is truly motivated to work at Rotary projects to create change in the society. She has initiated Project Dhadkan- Paediatric Heart Surgeries- in her term .

The magic to her youthful persona and never

give up attitude are her healthy habits. She regularly does 21 Surya Namaskar every day in the morning as a dose of her exercise. She also believes in accepting every challenge that comes towards the journey of life. She believes that whether it is laughter or tears, one should be comfortable expressing them and move on.

Jaishree has been closely involved with DAGMHI 3030 since its inception. She is satisfied that we are taking up so many initiatives like lectures, workshops, and even the monthly newsletter Mind Matters; which are instrumental in creating awareness about mental health issues. She believes it is very important to address the taboo topics as they can go a long way in saving young people from mental trauma.

She believes- The Magic happens when we do not give up even though we want to. The Universe always falls in love with a stubborn heart !!

-Dr. Shantala Bhole
Director, DAGMHI 3030

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THE RESURGENCE OF MUSIC THERAPY



Music therapy, an evidence-based clinical practice, uses musical interventions to enhance the quality of life, providing a therapeutic pathway for individuals to improve communication, socialization, emotional expression, and more. Through evidence-based interventions, trained music therapists help individuals by creatively engaging to address a variety of therapeutic goals, regardless of age or background. **While the needs of clients vary, the goals that music therapists work on are generally broken down into five domains: social, emotional, cognitive, communication, and physical.**

Music therapy may be beneficial to those who find it difficult to express themselves in words. Treatment may help those with mental health needs like trauma, dementia and stress. It is also beneficial for individuals with developmental and learning disabilities such as autism, movement disorders, ADHD etc.

Music therapy takes place in many different settings, including hospitals, schools, nursing homes, senior centres, outpatient clinics, mental health centres, homes for people with developmental disabilities or even treatment facilities for people with substance use disorders.

Music therapy is not just a modern-day healing method, but a practice rooted in ancient traditions across the globe. In the Biblical era, King Saul was said to be soothed by David's harp, while Hippocrates, the father of medicine, used music for therapeutic purposes in the 4th century BC. Similarly, ancient Ayurvedic practices in India recognized the healing power of music through 'Raga Chikitsa,' a treatment modality using ragas to restore balance to the mind and body.

The ancient system of Nada Yoga, which dates back to the time of the Tantras, has fully acknowledged the impact of music on body and mind and put into practice the vibrations emanating from sounds to uplift one's level of consciousness. It is the Indian genius that recognized that ragas are not just mere commodities of entertainment but the vibrations in their resonance could synchronize with one's moods and health. By stimulating the moods and controlling the brain wave patterns, ragas could work as a complementary medicine.

Raga is the sequence of selected notes (swaras) that lend appropriate 'mood' or emotion in a selective combination. Depending on their nature, a raga could induce or intensify joy or sorrow, violence or peace and it is this quality which forms the basis for musical application. Thus, a whole range of emotions and their nuances could be captured and communicated within certain rhythms and melodies. Playing, performing and even listening to appropriate ragas can work as a medicine.

Once a client is referred to a music therapist, the first step is to assess their needs and abilities based on an initial interview, and on medical and other relevant information provided by the client, their healthcare

team or their family. The evaluation process may continue over some sessions. When the music therapist has observed the client's musical preferences and responses to various music therapy interventions and techniques, they are able to establish goals and objectives and prepare an intervention plan that will guide how they work together in the course of their music therapy sessions.

Throughout the music therapy program, the music therapist makes progress notes, observations and recommendations for adjustments to the intervention plan as needed. Ongoing communication is essential between the therapist, client, family and other professionals involved.

Music therapists use a variety of interventions, methods and techniques to address clinical goals. Active music therapy methods require the client to be actively involved in music-making during sessions. Methods may be improvisational, in which the client improvises music spontaneously using instruments (for example: percussions), their voice or other forms of music technology, accompanied by the music therapist.

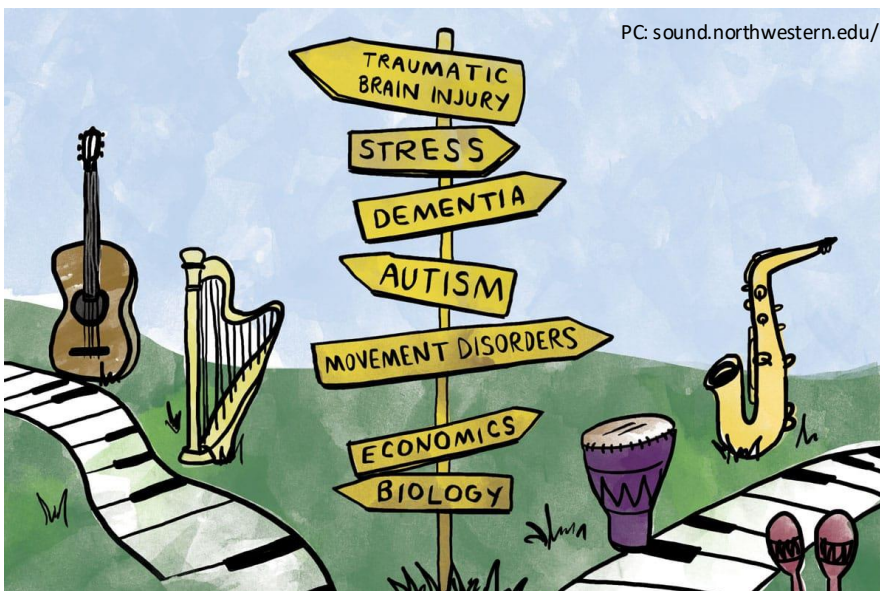
Music therapy methods are receptive when the client listens to selected music, chosen in relation to the intended objectives. **Receptive methods include relaxation with musical listening, song discussion, musical imagery, music listening during medical procedures or music listening to support movement coordination.** Depending on the context, the music therapist plays live or pre-recorded music to the client during these sessions.

Some methods are compositional, in which the client composes music or participates in song writing, with the assistance of the music therapist. Finally, some methods are recreational, where the client is involved in performing music that has already been composed. Clients may recreate through singing, playing instruments for themselves or performing for others. Singing releases pain-relieving endorphins, boosts the immune system, improves lung capacity and emotional well-being. **The music therapist plans therapeutic experiences and chooses instruments based on the client's needs, abilities and objectives.**

In India, music therapy has seen a resurgence in recent years, as the country reclaims its rich heritage of sound therapy. Historically, music played a significant role in traditional healing systems, but over time, the practice was overshadowed by other influences. Today, however, Indian music therapy is once again gaining recognition as a valuable form of complementary medicine.

-Arpita Chatterjee

Chair DAGMHI 3291



sneak peek at

MUSIC THERAPY

sessions



Music & Imagery



Music Making



Music Listening



Song Writing



Mindfulness



Drum Circle



Music & Art



Dialogues



Music & Movements



ECHOES OF ENLIGHTENMENT: THE ROLE OF INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC IN ACADEMIC SETTING

In Hindu philosophy, the universe was created with the sacred sound 'Om', a profound symphony that shaped the cosmos. This concept introduces us to Shabda Brahman, the transcendent sound, and the therapeutic power of music. Indian classical music's concept of raga emerges as a powerful emotional catalyst, evoking specific moods and capturing human emotions. Studies show that even uninitiated listeners can perceive emotions conveyed by ragas.

Indian Music Therapy offers a holistic approach to healing, utilizing Ragas, Taals, Mantras, and Shabdhas to create harmony within the mind, body, and spirit. This therapy aims to reduce stress, enhance cognitive functions, emotional stability, and physical health. **Integrating principles from Neurologic Music Therapy (NMT), Indian Music Therapy adapts methods within an educational framework. Techniques like rhythmic auditory stimulation (RAS) and melodic intonation therapy enhance attention spans, executive functions, and motor coordination.**

Dr. Shambhavi Das harnesses music's capability to stimulate brain networks associated with emotional regulation, cognitive enhancement, and motor skills. **Raga Chikitsa mitigates emotional and psychological distress while bolstering neurological health, making music a fundamental component in enhancing well-being and cognitive abilities.**

Modern educational environments pose significant challenges to student mental health. Recognizing the intense pressures faced by students, Dr. Shambhavi Das, a certified music therapist in India, initiated a study to explore the effectiveness of Indian classical music therapy in alleviating academic stress. Dr. Das utilized a comprehensive approach that integrates various traditional music therapy techniques and aimed to create a conducive learning environment that not only fosters academic success but also promotes mental well-being. The study was based on four primary domains of healing derived from Indian music therapy traditions:

1. Mantra Chikitsa (Mantra Therapy): Students began their day with the chanting of the Shanti Mantra. This ancient mantra was chanted five times each morning at a specific pitch (G#), known for its calming properties, to clear the mind of anxieties and prepare it for the day's academic challenges.

2. Passive Listening Interventions: Different ragas were played during specific times of the day to enhance cognitive functions and emotional well-being. Raag Hamsadhvani, known for its invigorating qualities, was played in the mornings to boost concentration and focus. In contrast, the evenings saw the use of Raag Yaman for adolescents and Raag Bhupali for younger students to promote relaxation and decompression after a day of studies.

3. Rhythmic Therapy Sessions: Over a period of two weeks, Dr. Shambhavi conducted rhythmic therapy sessions, each lasting one hour. These sessions incorporated box breathing exercises set to the soothing sounds of nature, alongside interactive rhythmic speech activities using hand drums and Mridangams. The rhythmic tapping and movement activities were designed to align the students' physiological and psychological rhythms, fostering a state of active mindfulness.

4. Daily Routine: The students engaged in mantra chanting and passive listening both in the morning and before bedtime. This routine was structured to reinforce the therapeutic effects of the music throughout the day and ensure a restful, regenerative sleep.

The interventions led to remarkable improvements in the mental health and academic performance of the students. **Adolescents aged 14-21 experienced a substantial 40% increase in academic focus, accompanied by a significant reduction in stress levels, leading to heightened motivation and sharper cognitive focus. Younger participants, aged 8-14, showed a 30% improvement in essential cognitive functions such as memory and problem-solving skills.**

Furthermore, there were **overall improvements in classroom behavior, including reduced procrastination and increased mindfulness.** These positive changes were not only observed by the research team but were also corroborated by **teachers and parents, who reported noticeable improvements in the demeanor and engagement of the students with academic activities.**

Study by Dr. Das showcases the profound impact of Indian music therapy on academic and emotional challenges faced by students. The strategic use of mantra chanting, ragas, and rhythmic exercises not only alleviated stress but also improved cognitive functions, paving the way for a holistic educational experience. This innovative approach promises a new direction in educational strategies, where the focus extends beyond mere academic achievement to encompass overall mental and emotional health.

The profound impact of Dr. Das's music therapy interventions leave us to ponder broader questions about the welfare of our students in an increasingly competitive and stressful academic landscape.

- **Dr. Shambhavi Das**

Music Therapist, Founder Manonaad Centre for Music Therapy, Gurugram

- **Dr. Meghna Middha, PhD**
Research Mentor

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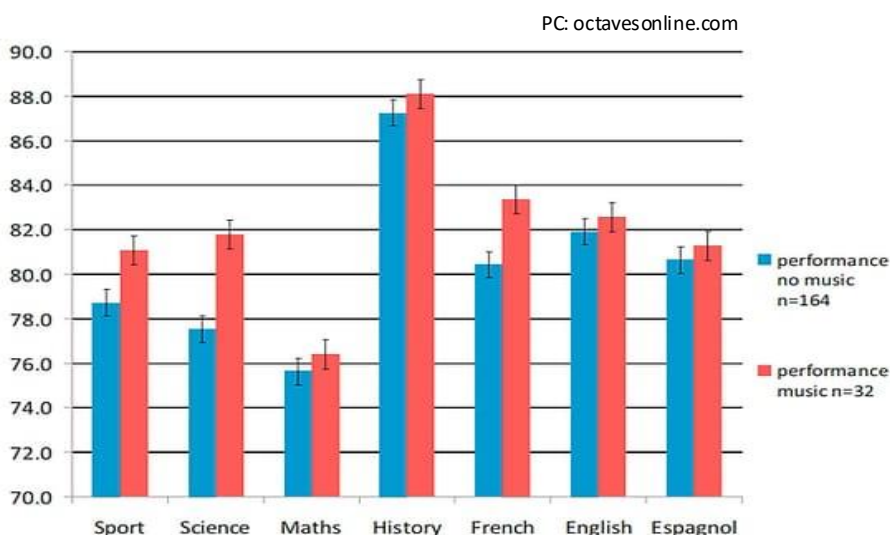


Fig. 1. The mean grades for different courses for the students (14-15 yrs) from the third school-year of secondary school, during the year 2011-12.]

EMOTIONAL TURBULENCE AND MUSIC THERAPY

A 15-year-old boy whose parents are well educated and working, was brought to me by his mother. I was informed that he was good in academics, regular with his studies and is an emerging tennis player. He was unreserved, warm and friendly. He had a good bond and open communication with both the parents.

Currently he has been **avoiding going to school and missing his practice sessions**. He would leave home to go to school but would often spend time in a park or nearby temple. He was not even completing his homework and he was **reluctant to share the reason**. He was **emotionally withdrawn** and was **avoiding communicating with his parents**. There were no significant visible issues in school or at home. The family confirmed that he was not under any pressure - academics or external.

My initial approach in this case was to establish an interaction, build trust and observe/ understand his behaviour at the same time. I refrained from asking direct questions so that he could be comfortable with me. After a couple of sessions, I realised that he was **emotionally overwhelmed due to eminent attention, parental expectations and constant reinforcement of being special** i.e. the 'only heir' of the family. This had created **subconscious pressure and a feeling of isolation** in him. There were no other visible stressors and internalised thoughts were the only concern.

Knowing his emotional state, I recommended a few specific Indian ragas. Raag Yaman to calm his mind and create emotional balance, Raag Bhairavi to reduce internalised anxiety and create a sense of stability; and Raag Des to rejuvenate energy and improve focus. He was instructed to listen to these Ragas for two months at given specific times.

After 1 and half months, his mother noticed **positive changes in his behaviour**. He had resumed attending school, performed well in academics, played tennis with the same dedication as before without skipping sessions. There was a **positive emotional shift**. The boy became **more open and started participating in family conversations**. His **quiet withdrawal was replaced with a balanced, cheerful and confident behaviour**.

Music therapy helped the boy by addressing his emotional struggle which was not overly apparent, but was affecting his behaviour and overall well-being. It proved to be a gentle yet powerful tool to soothe his emotional turbulence and helped him process his thoughts and build emotional resilience; thus relieving the subconscious pressure. Indian raga helped him release the built-up emotions, providing emotional regulation, and reconnecting with his goals.

This case highlights the effectiveness of Music therapy in addressing emotional and behavioral changes in adolescents.

-Harshala Ravindra Samant
Certified Music Therapist, Nashik

MUSIC THERAPY AND MENTAL HEALTH

-Seema Bambardekar
(Sangeet visharad, MA Classical Vocal Music)

has expressed her thoughts and experiences through a video.
Tap the link to listen to her journey with music.

<https://youtu.be/OQf5N0P24o8?si=mcYtPvtQY2SbJWrO>

MUSIC THERAPY AS A TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE

Music therapy, as defined by the American Music Therapy Association (AMTA), is the clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish individualized goals within a therapeutic relationship by a credentialed professional who has completed an approved music therapy program. In treating trauma which is primarily the psychological, emotional, and bodily response to an incident or sequence of events deemed extremely perilous and damaging—this holistic practice has great promise.

The main objective of trauma-informed therapies is to be able to provide people with a safe, supportive and empowered environment in order to facilitate the processing and healing of these experiences. These practices focus on principles such as safety, trustworthiness, collaboration, empowerment, and cultural competence, **making certain that interventions don't cause clients to experience trauma again.** Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Complex PTSD, which are marked by widespread emotions of guilt, shame, and hypervigilance, emotional dysregulation, and low self-esteem, are often connected to trauma. Thus, in helping them address these basic problems, a sophisticated and sensitive framework is very much needed for therapy.

The ability of music therapy to engage nonverbal processes and get over the cognitive barriers that trauma survivors frequently create makes it especially well-suited to trauma care. Music therapists analyse the client's preferences, triggers, emotional reactions, and preparedness for therapeutic participation during the music therapy assessment. This individualized assessment guides the selection of music-based interventions relevant to each person's needs and objectives.

There are numerous advantages to using music therapy in trauma care. **By regulating physiological arousal, music can encourage grounding and relaxation. It makes emotional expression easier, assisting clients in expressing difficult-to-verbalize complicated feelings like guilt and shame.** Moreover, music therapy promotes trust and a sense of connection, all of which are critical for those who have suffered relational trauma. Making music or writing songs can also empower clients by increasing their sense of autonomy and worth.

Music therapy can be effectively integrated with a wide range of trauma care practices to add more impact to the practice. **Approaches such as Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), mindfulness-based therapies, somatic experiencing, cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), and narrative therapy benefit from the incorporation of music.** A more dynamic and comprehensive therapeutic environment will be created by incorporating music therapy into these frameworks.

To sum up, music therapy provides a client-centered, trauma-informed approach that tackles the complex effects of trauma. Through the integration of safety, empowerment, and emotional expression, music therapy helps trauma survivors rebuild their lives and regain their voices in addition to promoting healing.

-Anju Vijayan
Medical Music Therapist (MSc MMT)
Social worker (MSW) Kochi, Kerala



Scan this QR code to listen to a compilation of meditation songs. It will help you calm your mind.

MELODIES OF PROGRESS

Introduction

Every child holds immense potential, waiting to be nurtured. This is the story of Anika (name changed), an 11-year-old girl who has overcome developmental challenges through the **transformative power of Indian music therapy**. Her journey highlights how traditional Gandharva music, paired with structured interventions, can bring profound cognitive, emotional, and social growth.

Background

Anika, a sociable and friendly child, faced early challenges as a slow learner. She struggled with speech clarity, understanding complex instructions, and retaining information, which impacted her academics and social interactions. With no family health history or medical conditions, her parents turned to alternative therapies, combining speech therapy, remedial classes, and Carnatic music therapy.

Early Interventions

Speech therapy provided Anika with foundational communication skills, but gaps in articulation remained. Remedial academic sessions helped her strengthen reading, writing, and conceptual understanding, improving her academic confidence. However, it was **the introduction of music therapy in December 2019 that became a turning point**.

Music Therapy's Role

Indian music therapy immersed Anika in rhythm, melody, and disciplined practice. Over 2.5 years, she learned 15 slokas, 20 bhajans, and advanced classical exercises like 4-4 Alankaras and Janti Varasai #4. Playing instruments such as the keyboard and tabla further **enhanced her cognitive abilities, improving problem-solving and mathematical reasoning**. Her favorite ragas, Bhupali and Des, **boosted her concentration and reduced unnecessary thoughts**.

Progress Beyond Music

Music therapy's structured approach improved Anika's memory, focus, and speech clarity. Academically, she became more independent, actively participating in class. Emotionally, she grew calmer and more confident, exhibiting better tolerance and task management. Her sociable nature and willingness to engage in conversations, despite challenges, signal strong potential for further growth.

Key Outcomes

Improved Focus: Enhanced concentration through structured musical practices.

Cognitive Growth: Better memory and comprehension, with notable speech improvements.

Emotional Stability: Increased calmness, self-esteem, and joy.

Social Skills: Greater ability to navigate social settings.

Looking Ahead

Anika's journey of resilience continues. Continued music therapy and group activities will foster her communication and social skills, helping her realize her full potential. With patience and dedication, Anika's future is bright—a harmonious blend of confidence, clarity, and joy.

-Dr. Shambhavi Das

Music Therapist, Manonaad Centre for Music Therapy & Education, Gurugram

MUSIC: ANCIENT REMEDY, MODERN THERAPY

“Music energizes”, “music is a great stress-buster”, “music drives away blues” - such music-eulogizing statements have been used by us for centuries, pointing towards the positive effects of music on the human psyche. Bone flutes, dated back to 43,000 B.C.E., discovered in a German cave, are a testimony to our link to music for tens of thousands of years.

The therapeutic effects of music have been mentioned in ancient texts from as diverse populations as Babylonian, Egyptian and our own ancient Indian texts like Sama-Veda and Gandharva-Veda. “Music Therapy” as a scientific discipline has been recognized since around 1800 C.E. **In India, music therapy has been studied largely using Hindustani and Carnatic classical forms.** The effects of different ragas on moods and various physical and psychological ailments have been described from time to time. Though it is claimed that a specific raga cures a specific corresponding illness, the claim is unlikely to be credible. The reason is that a given raga can alter the mood to a somber one, or a joyous one, or a sad one and so on, and not necessarily being so specific in its effect as to “cure” a specific disease.

In the Indian context, the use of light music for music therapy is almost non-existent. **Since the vast majority of the Indian population listens to light music and not the classical form, does light music too have a therapeutic value becomes a moot question.**

To examine the answer to this question, we decided to carry out research on this at the local N.K.P. Salve Institute of Medical Sciences, Nagpur, where I teach psychiatry to undergraduate and postgraduate students. We planned a **controlled study, enrolling sixty consecutive patients with major depression**. They were divided into groups A and B of thirty each. The group A was encouraged to listen to music of their choice for half an hour twice a day through headphones, along with appropriate antidepressant medication. The music was a mix of film and non-film variety depending on a patient's specific choice. Group B was administered only antidepressants.

After two months of treatment, assessments on both the groups showed a statistically significant improvement in group A compared to group B, thereby **indicating that addition of exposure to light music to the customary antidepressant medication has a more beneficial effect as compared to antidepressants alone**. This shows that the ubiquitous light music in our country can be made good use of in treating depression. More studies with a larger number of patients may help strengthen the conclusions drawn from our study, and maybe pave the way for the use of light music in other negative mood states.

-Dr. Sudhir Bhawe

Psychiatrist, Nagpur

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Scan the QR to access
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Mind Matters

A SYMPHONY OF HEALING AND RESILIENCE

Neha (name changed), a 29-year-old woman from a rural village in India, survived a devastating acid attack orchestrated by her abusive, alcoholic husband following years of domestic violence. The attack left her with severe facial disfigurement, blindness in one eye, and deep emotional trauma. After undergoing multiple reconstructive surgeries, Neha faced profound depression, social withdrawal, and loss of self-esteem. She was introduced to music therapy as a complementary intervention.

Initially resistant, Neha slowly engaged with the process after being encouraged to vocalize her pain through song. Guided by a trained music therapist, she began with simple humming exercises that helped regulate her breathing and reduce anxiety. Over time, Neha explored traditional Indian ragas, using the melodic structures to express grief and hope. She started reflecting her resilience and desire to reclaim her identity. As she progressed into group-drumming circles and community singing sessions, they provided a space where she felt supported and accepted.

Music therapy plays a crucial role in promoting neuroplasticity – the brain's ability to reorganize and form new neural connections. This process is vital for trauma recovery, as music engages multiple brain regions involved in memory, motor function, and emotion. Studies show that rhythmic patterns and melodies stimulate the hippocampus and prefrontal cortex, fostering synaptic connectivity and reducing neuroinflammation. The release of brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF) during musical engagement enhances neural repair and growth, supporting recovery from trauma-induced cognitive impairments ([Eleni, H., Moschonas. et al 2023](#)).

In Neha's case, singing not only helped regulate her emotions but also catalyzed neural growth, contributing to improved emotional resilience and self-regulation. Over six months, Neha reported decreased anxiety, better mood stability, and enhanced confidence. Long-term engagement in music therapy often yields sustained psychological benefits, including reduced PTSD symptoms and improved self-esteem in survivors of abuse. Survivors like Neha experience greater social connection and empowerment through creative expression, which reinforces emotional healing and fosters a positive self-image as shown in the study by [Beer & Kwoun, 2024](#).

Moreover, integrating music therapy with group counseling for survivors of domestic violence creates a holistic healing environment. Group drumming, songwriting, and collaborative musical activities promote trust, collective healing, and solidarity among survivors. This integrated approach enhances verbal counselling by offering non-verbal outlets for trauma processing, reducing isolation, and building a supportive community. Studies reveal that blending music therapy with group sessions not only amplifies emotional healing but also strengthens interpersonal connections, fostering resilience within survivor groups ([Efodzi et al., 2024](#)).

Neha's transformation from victim to advocate highlights the power of music therapy in reshaping trauma narratives. Today, she volunteers at a local women's shelter, using music to uplift others on similar paths to recovery.

-Dr Sripriya Shaji
Counselling Psychologist & Nutritionist,
Kozhikode

Apoorva Raagangal (Rare Melodies)

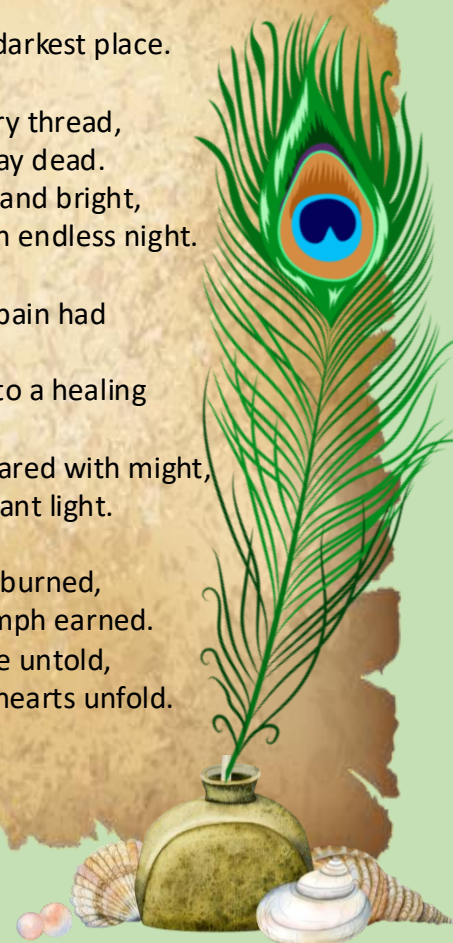
In shadows deep where silence cried,
A spark arose, where hope had died.
Through shattered dreams and broken
grace,
Music wove light in the darkest place.

Each swara surged, a fiery thread,
Reviving life from what lay dead.
Apoorva raagangal, rare and bright,
Echoing strength through endless night.

The raga danced where pain had
scarred,
Transforming wounds into a healing
bard.
A voice once silenced roared with might,
Turning despair into radiant light.

In every note, resilience burned,
A hymn of courage, triumph earned.
Apoorva raagangal, a tale untold,
Where music heals and hearts unfold.

-Dr. Sripriya Shaji



MUSIC THERAPY FOR MENTAL HEALTH

OUTCOMES DOCUMENTED IN MUSIC THERAPY RESEARCH

- Improved self-image/ Increased self-esteem
- Decreased anxiety/agitation
- Enhanced interpersonal relationships
- Improved group cohesiveness
- Increased motivation
- Successful and safe emotional release

From the AMTA Factsheet
@DynamicLynks



THE BRAIN'S PLAYLIST: HOW MUSIC IMPACTS OUR MIND AND EMOTIONS!

When we listen to music or engage with it, it activates a number of brain areas, including those responsible for emotions, memory, motor control, and even social connection. The Limbic System is the brain's emotional center, which is highly activated when listening to music. **The release of dopamine (happy hormone), a neurotransmitter associated with pleasure, is triggered by music, particularly when listening to pieces that are personally meaningful or enjoyable.** The Auditory Cortex processes the sounds we hear and helps us recognize patterns, rhythms, and melodies. This is where the brain decodes the sensory information that makes music intelligible. The Prefrontal Cortex is linked to higher-order cognitive functions like decision-making, attention, and problem-solving. Music can engage this area, fostering better concentration and focus. **Even without moving, your brain responds to rhythm.** Listening to music with a strong beat can activate motor neurons, which can explain the irresistible urge to tap your feet or dance. The Hippocampus, the brain region responsible for memory and learning, is heavily involved in music processing, which explains why certain songs can trigger powerful memories and emotions. Through these various mechanisms, music therapy can stimulate neural plasticity—the brain's ability to reorganize and form new connections, which is essential for recovery and healing in cases of brain injury, stroke, or neurodegenerative diseases.

The type of music you listen to can have varying effects on the brain. Different genres of music engage different neural pathways and produce distinct emotional responses. **Studies have shown that classical music, especially music with a slow tempo and steady rhythm, can improve focus, concentration, and memory.** The so-called "Mozart Effect" suggests that listening to classical music may enhance spatial-temporal reasoning. Classical music's soothing and structured nature makes it a popular choice for relaxation and stress reduction.

In India, the concept of Raag (use of specific notes with specific pitch and melodic patterns with a decided framework of presentation of musical notes showcases a variety of moods and emotion based effects. **Research says Raag based Indian classical music creates a huge impact on result based interventions of music therapy as compared to any other form of world music.** Fast-paced rock and pop music can elevate mood and increase energy levels. Upbeat rock or pop music stimulates the release of dopamine, which boosts feelings of pleasure and excitement. These genres are often used in music therapy to help individuals with depression

or low energy. Additionally, lyrics in pop and rock songs can offer emotional validation and connection, especially for people who may feel isolated. Jazz and blues are known for their improvisational quality, which can evoke a deep emotional response. While not a traditional genre, nature sounds and ambient music are becoming increasingly popular for therapeutic purposes. These types of music are often used to reduce stress and promote relaxation. Ambient music, which features slow, calming tones and minimalistic structures, can lower blood pressure and create a sense of tranquility. Nature sounds like rain, ocean waves, or bird songs activate the brain's calming mechanisms, helping to reduce anxiety and improve sleep. EDM (Electronic Dance Music)'s fast beats and repetitive rhythms are used in music therapy to energize individuals, particularly during exercise or rehabilitation. The rhythmic patterns and intense drops can create a sense of euphoria, stimulate dopamine release, and elevate mood. **This genre is often incorporated into physical therapy or fitness programs as a motivational tool.**

Aggressive, Heavy-metal rock music, often present in genres like hardcore, punk, or certain subgenres of metal, is marked by high energy, intense rhythms, and often aggressive or rebellious lyrics. This type of music can stimulate a heightened state of arousal in the brain. While listening to aggressive or violent music can serve as an emotional outlet, prolonged exposure may lead to an increased tendency for aggression in certain individuals, particularly if the music's themes are glorifying violence. Research suggests that people who identify with violent music lyrics may be more likely to exhibit aggressive behaviors or be desensitized to violence over time. **For some individuals, heavy and aggressive music can exacerbate negative moods such as anger, sadness, or frustration.** If someone listens to metal or aggressive rock when feeling emotionally unstable, it could reinforce their negative emotions, making it harder to break out of a downward emotional spiral.

Lyrics also play a huge role in creating a form of highlighted emotions, incidents, memory association in songs which people choose to listen to. It triggers the brain and gives the hint of listening impact with composed or written meanings and associated emotions.

The power of music to affect the brain is undeniable, and when harnessed through therapy, it becomes a valuable resource for improving mental and emotional health.

-Santosh Ghatpande
Certified Practising Music Therapist



TECHNOLOGY AND MUSIC THERAPY



AI and Apps: AI has grown significantly popular nowadays, and is being used worldwide for recreation, work and so many other things, one of these things being music therapy. If we don't know anything or don't understand anything about music &/or cannot find a music therapist around us; we ask AI to help!

There are many apps available which have different "moods" and curate playlists according to the listeners' needs. These apps will help you make playlists which help you focus on work, fall asleep, reduce stress/anxiety, or even just listen to music because it makes you feel better and you need a break from whatever work you are doing.

But how exactly will this work? If you ask AI or any music therapy app to help you curate a playlist which will help you relieve stress, AI will find music which will help secrete a hormone called endorphin in your body, which helps relieve stress. Similarly, it will help you focus or reduce anxiety.

Binaural Beats Therapy: It is a self-help technique where you hear two different frequencies in each ear (through stereo headphones) but the

brain perceives it as a single tone. These frequencies or sound waves lock-in some and enhance certain brain waves. The alpha (8-14 Hz) waves are associated with relaxation that is achieved with meditation. The beta waves (14-38 Hz) are known to create alertness as if you are engaged in problem solving. The theta waves (4-8 Hz) help to achieve deep relaxation which is similar to when we are in REM sleep and are daydreaming. The delta waves (1-4 Hz) result in deep sleep. This semi-experimental treatment helps to reduce stress, anxiety, pain and improves mood, focus and sleep.

Though music calms your mind and helps with emotional regulation, it has got certain limits and hence it is highly recommended to consult a mental health expert.

-Sara Pimprikar
Member, DAGMHI 3030 India
Mental Health Ally

ROTARY CLUB OF PERTH: LUNCHEON MEETING - 6TH DECEMBER 2024

Being a passionate Rotarian, even on a family holiday, you cannot resist attending the local Rotary Club meeting-it is imperative! The heart-warming welcome, the new-found friends, the awareness of local projects and priorities are all irresistible! The visit to Rotary Club of Perth, D9423, Western Australia was memorable. My niece Divya Aggarwal, my host/resident, was my guide and accompanied me to the meeting at Parmelia, Hilton.

President Manu Gupta, young dynamic, was very gracious and welcoming. He gave an astounding introduction to me in the meeting. He handed over a flag of his Club too!

International Director, PP Wesley Sim, paid for my ticket to the luncheon! He also created a WhatsApp group named 'Rita in Perth', the moment I contacted him!! That was so encouraging.

Membership Director, PP Jill Dawson sprang into action the moment she heard of my interest in mental health and lined up a meeting with the Directors of Australian Rotary Health (ARH), which is a unique association committed to mental/physical health by the 14 Districts of Australia. Vocational Director, PDG & PP Graham Peden offered an invitation to a meeting on 'health of indigenous people'.

The speaker Thomas Murrell had an interesting topic 'Leadership Lessons from the Fairview Art Collection'. His focus was on -what are the challenges facing women artists and what can we learn from them to make better leaders'. Thomas is the Managing Director of 8M Media and Communications and an international business speaker, author, company director and art collector. His gallery of works, known as the Fairview Art Collection is of national significance and has a special focus on women artists from South Australia and Western Australia from the 1850s to the present day. He spent what he calls "a 12-year apprenticeship" at the Australian Broadcasting Corporation as a radio and TV personality and senior media executive.

The secretary of RC Perth Don Mazzucchelli, is the oldest member of 55 years! The Treasurer is Joseph Wambua. There were 24 enthusiastic attendees. The lunch was delicious and sumptuous. It is the oldest and largest Club in Perth with a total of 85 members. It will be celebrating 100 years on 15/04/2027! I wish it all success and hope to visit them again perhaps on their centenary!

-Rita Aggarwal



Receiving the Club flag from President Manu Gupta



Divya, Thomas Murrell, Rita, Jill Dawson and Manu Gupta

MEETING WITH AUSTRALIAN ROTARY HEALTH (ARH): 20th December 2024

Vice Chair Jerry Pilcher, Director & DG Pat Schraven of Australia Rotary Health (ARH), District Chair Warwick Smith of (ARH), Rajeev Aggarwal, member RC Nagpur, India and Chair Elect- Rotary Action Group on Mental Health Initiatives, (RAGMHI) Rita Aggarwal met at 9.15 am at the Coffee shop of Parmelia Hilton hotel in Perth.

The agenda was to familiarise each other with the workings of ARH and RAGMHI and consider collaboration in terms of sharing information, knowledge, encourage Clubs and Districts of Australia becoming members of RAGMHI and forming District Chapters. ARH aims for ground-breaking research on mental health and then promotes the findings to the community through the Clubs. They make use of the knowledge gained through research by disseminating it, generating awareness and implementing projects on mental health across Australia. We could increase the scope of their work across the entire Rotary ecosystem through the channels /network of RAGMHI which is world wide.

ARH is a project of the Rotary Districts of Australia supported by Rotary Clubs. It was established as a charitable fund in 1981 by PP Ian Scott. It is one of the largest independent funders of mental health research in Australia. It also funds a range of general health, indigenous health and rural medical and nursing areas. The donations collected are allocated for PhD Scholarships, Postdoctoral Fellowships and Project Grants. Millions of dollars are collected and allocated to scholars applying for it. They receive roughly 400 applications yearly which are rigorously screened by the expert team and 40 applicants are awarded the scholarship. ARH is a well structured body made up of members, Directors, District Chairs, Administrative staff, Research Committee, Ambassadors, Life members and Patrons.

Since the year 2000, ARH has focused on mental health. In 2012 the focus was on mental health of 'Young Australians', 2013 it was 'Prevention of mental health', in 2023 it has shifted to 'mental health of children aged 0-12'.

My hearty congratulations to ARH for their wonderful work. We would love to have them as members of RAGMHI. I foresee the partnership as a wonderful opportunity for growth and impact.

www.australianrotaryhealth.org.au
www.ragonmentalhealth.org

**-Rita Aggarwal
 Chair-Elect, RAGMHI**



PDG Jerry Pilcher
 Vice Chair ARH



Warwick Smith
 District Chair ARH



DG Pat Schraven
 Director ARH



Rajeev Aggarwal,
 RC Nagpur, India



Rita Aggarwal
 Chair Elect RAGMHI