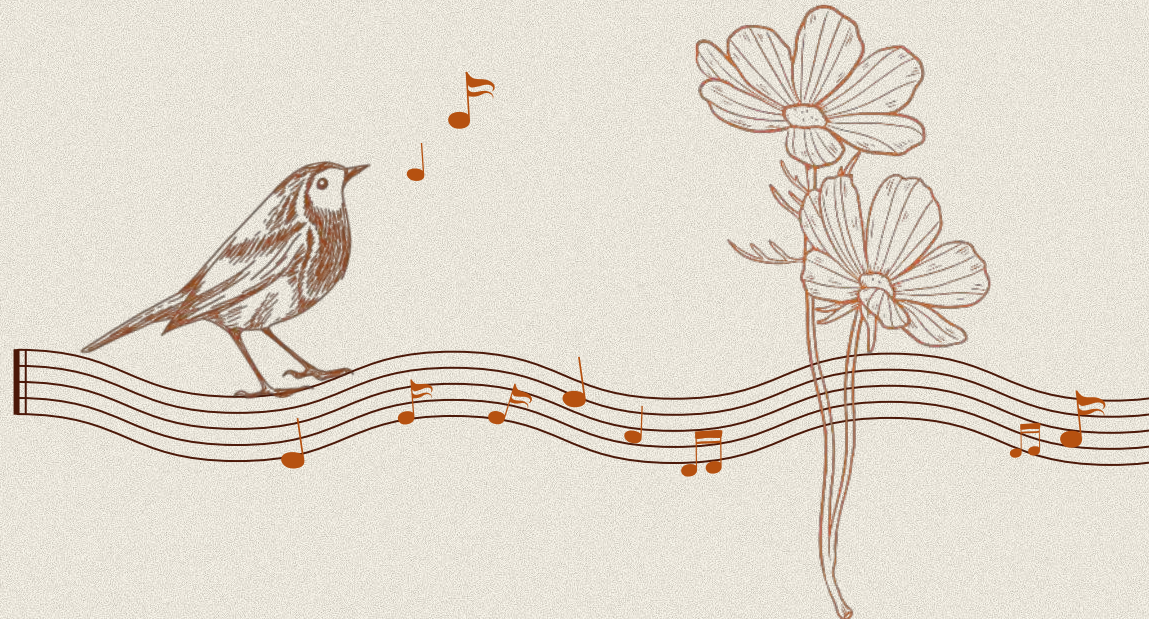


# *Sonorous Sessions: How to Integrate Music into Your Practice*

Cassie Meredith  
A-LPC-MHSP, MT-BC



# Session Objectives

Following this session, participants will be able to...

1.

Define and describe music therapy as a profession and practice

2.

Identify the difference between a licensed music therapist and a therapist who utilizes creative expression during sessions

3.

Provide three different examples of ways to use music with their clients





01

# What is Music Therapy?

# Definition

*The American Music Therapy Association (AMTA) states:*

“Music Therapy is the clinical & 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 Layman’s Terms?*

Music therapy is \_\_\_\_\_

🎵 *Music Therapy is NOT:*

🎵 Listening to music to help you focus, joining a choir to make social connections, feeling better after a Zumba class, making a solid connection with a music teacher, or going to a songwriting class. True music therapy requires a \_\_\_\_\_,



\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_

# Why Use Music in My Sessions?



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If your client already has a passion for music, you can use that passion and understanding to access other goal areas

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Music can be a way to express and explore things using different parts of the brain than verbal processing, which can make things easier or less threatening to confront

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Music can be felt in the body very easily. Music is also a traditional way of healing in many indigenous cultures. Somatic therapy techniques are often enhanced with music



# Common Music Therapy Interventions

01

## *Lyric Analysis*

Builds emotional expression, empathy building, and cognitive processing

04

## *Songwriting*

Touches on emotional expression, self-esteem, and problem solving skills

02

## *Mindfulness*

Trains non judgemental observing and focus skills

05

## *HeartBeat Recordings*

Allows legacy building and grief processing

03

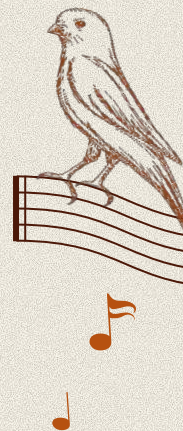
## *Improvisation*

Facilitates communication skills and emotional expression

06

## *Movement*

Develops fine and gross motor skills through dancing, singing, and instrument play



# KNOWLEDGE CHECK

## Music Therapy or Therapeutic Music?

1.

Music Therapy or  
Therapeutic Music?

2.

Music Therapy or  
Therapeutic Music?

3.

Music Therapy or  
Therapeutic Music?

4.

Music Therapy or  
Therapeutic Music?

5.

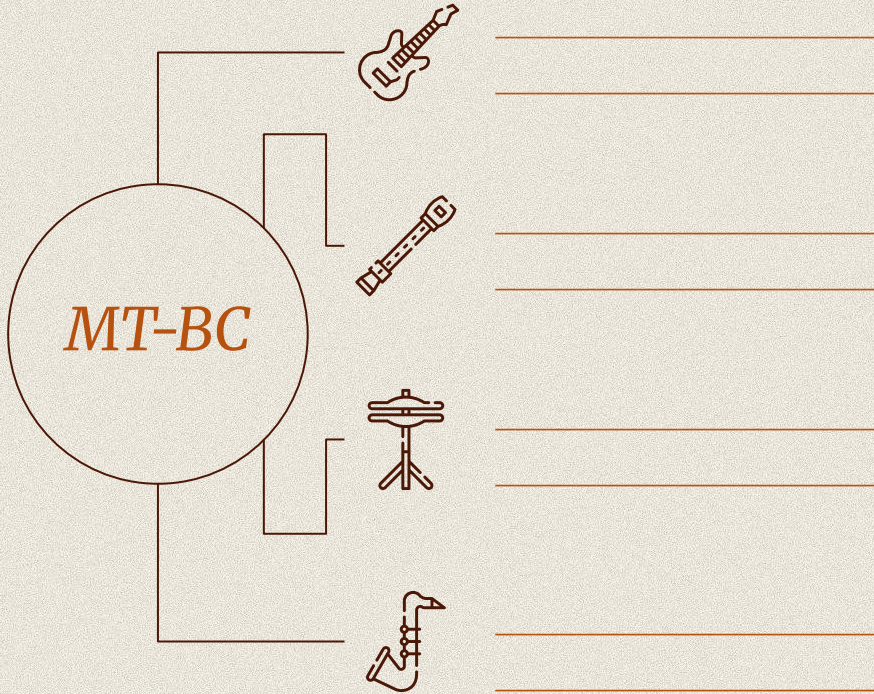
Music Therapy or  
Therapeutic Music?

6.

Music Therapy or  
Therapeutic Music?



# Who Are Licensed Music Therapists?



In order to become a music therapist, you first have to get a bachelor's degree in music therapy. You could also get a "master's equivalency" degree if you already have a related undergraduate degree

Prior to sitting for the licensure exam, all music therapists must complete at minimum 1200 hours of internship practice, usually completed in a full-time, unpaid internship that spans 6 months

The licensure exam is created by the Certification Board for Music Therapists (CBMT). It consists of 150 questions about 5 key content domains

Once you pass the exam, you receive the MT-BC license! Music therapists have to complete 100 CE's every 5 years to maintain certification

# Why Refer to a Music Therapist?



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Does your client need more frequent sessions, but they are starting to get burnt out on talk therapy? Music therapy is a fantastic supplemental service!



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Does your client REALLY hate therapy? Music therapy might be a way to address the issues in a way that is perceived as less threatening, reducing client freeze



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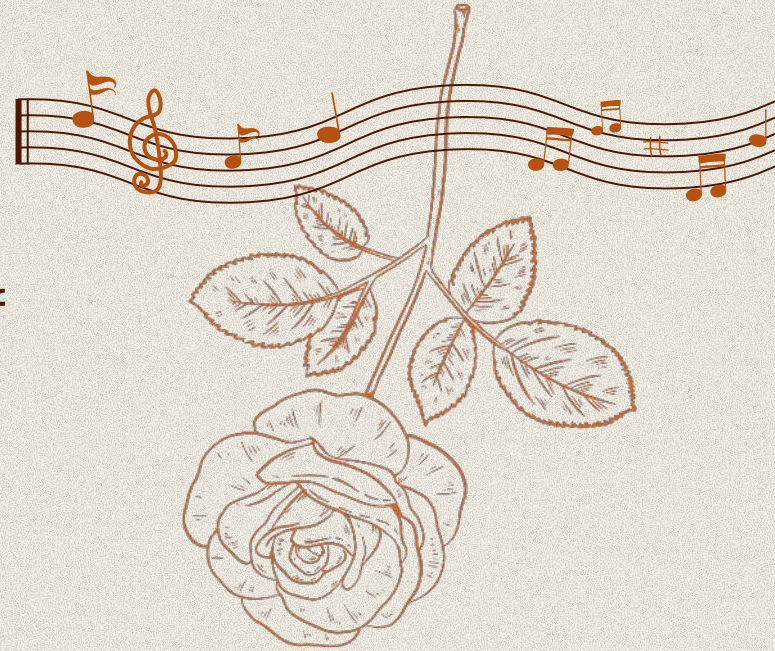
Sometimes, clients benefit from a more creative and holistic approach. Music therapists specialize in seeing things from a different angle, so you don't have to step outside of your scope of practice if you are uncomfortable





In May 2024, TN Legislature passed two laws that protected the status of TN music therapists and made it illegal to claim to be a music therapist without the proper education and licensing

- **HB 0521 and SB 0898**





# But I Like Using Music in Sessions?!

Will I get fined or reprimanded?

## Yes If....

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## No If...

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# So if I can use music in my sessions... Why does this even matter?



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It is part of most codes of ethics to not falsely advertise. Additionally, music can be extremely activating/challenging when used in the wrong contexts. Without training, it is possible to do harm to clients unintentionally

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All good therapy depends on evidenced-based practice. If non-music therapists are claiming to do music therapy, it can damage the scientific reputation, grant funding, and results of studies as we try to improve the field

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Licensed music therapists in Nashville make between 40k-65k, in part due to the lack of recognition for the license. To advocate for more equitable pay, music therapists need to be distinct from “music healers” and other non-licensed individuals





# Your Turn!

Ideas on How to Use Music  
in Your Sessions



Do you already use music?  
How?



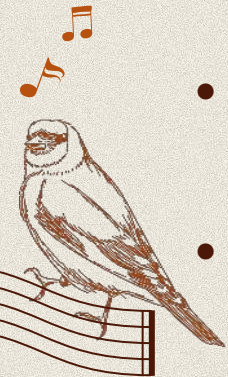
# Suggestion 1: Music for Emotional Expression

- Pick a Song That...
  - Have clients choose songs that represent certain emotions, memories, people, etc., and allow them time to explain why those songs resonate
- Lyric Analysis
  - Select a song with pertinent themes and dissect the lyrics with the client. What did the songwriter mean? Do you agree? Are there distortions present? Etc.
- Where Do You Feel That in the Body?
  - Play different songs and let the client identify what emotion the music is portraying and where in the body they feel that music
- Blackout Poetry
  - Using lyric printouts, let clients “write” their own songs by marking out pieces of the existing lyrics.
- Music and Art
  - Have a client draw or color a representation of the music they are hearing and explain why they chose those specific colors and patterns



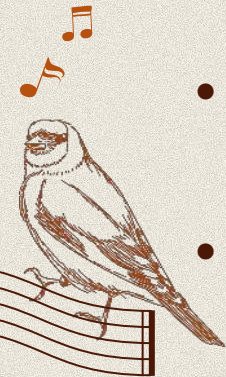
# Suggestion 2: Music for Mindfulness

- Instrument Identification
  - Have clients identify a specific instrument that they want to focus on each time they listen to a song
- Non-judgmental Observation
  - Allow clients to listen to music and make factual, non-judgemental statements about what they hear (tempo, dynamics, instruments, texture, etc.). Bonus if the music is from a genre they do not normally enjoy
- Count the Words
  - Count how many times one specific word appears in a song
- Finish the Lyric
  - Have lyrics printed out with blank spaces periodically throughout. Encourage clients to listen carefully to the music and fill in the blanks
- Music Assisted Meditation
  - Use music as a background during meditations to help with overactive minds



# Suggestion 3: Music for Emotion Regulation

- Iso Principle Playlists
  - Create a playlist of songs that start at one emotional extreme and slowly shift to a different emotion (i.e. anger → calm)
- Paired Breathing with Music
  - Most popular music today is grouped in 4's. Breathe in tempo with the music to complete most common paced breathing exercises
- Dancing/Singing as a Way to Close the Stress Cycle
  - Dancing and singing are great ways to use the body to trick the mind into feeling safe and regulated
- Building Mastery
  - Learning about music, playing an instrument, or writing songs can be a great way to build self-esteem and mastery
- Building Community
  - Encourage clients to engage in community music events to prevent isolation







# Questions?

(Additional Resources and Contact Info at the  
End of the Slides)



# Resources

## *Local Resources*

- Empower Music Therapy, LLC
  - Project Play Therapy
  - Music and Miracles
  - Music Therapy Nashville
  - Jess Knoble Music
  - Belmont University Music Therapy Department
  - Music and Cognition Lab at Vanderbilt University
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## *Internet Resources*

- American Music Therapy Association ([www.musictherapy.org](http://www.musictherapy.org))
- Certification Board for Music Therapists ([www.cbmt.org](http://www.cbmt.org))
- Ideas for Therapeutic Music Activities in Sessions (<https://positivepsychology.com/music-therapy-activities-tools/>)
- Music Therapy Research through NCCIH ([www.nccih.nih.gov](http://www.nccih.nih.gov))



*Thank you!*  
*Feel free to reach out if you have more  
specific questions or comments:  
[crmeredith316@gmail.com](mailto:crmeredith316@gmail.com)*