

# How music can improve your emotional health

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A lot of people love the way music makes them feel.

But music therapy can also improve your physical and emotional health.

And it can be used with people of all ages.

"I think music touches on so many aspects of our being," said Hilary Lipsett, the leader of a music therapy program at the Pine Grove Care Home in Richmond, B.C.

In that role, she says she sees first hand the benefits that music can have on a group of seniors.

"It's very empowering for people -- it gives them a purpose," she said. "There's also a big cognitive aspect too. When they're together they have to be waiting all the time for the physical cue," she said.

Hilary also leads smaller groups for residents who suffer from dementia.

Some of these women members have trouble recalling daily things. But once the music starts....they can remember lyrics to old familiar songs.

"It accesses a different part of the brain, for them which help them to recall memories, childhood memories which is apparently what people retain well into their old age, even when cognitive abilities are decreasing," said Lipsett.

Along with improving memory, music therapy can increase mobility and concentration, promote relaxation and enhance social interaction. Above all, it can bring a lot of joy.

"It's very rewarding, what's great about it, I get to see the smiles on people's faces," said Lipsett.

Music therapy, questions and answers

**Q.** Is music therapy more beneficial for those who are more musical to begin with?

**A.** This doesn't seem to be the case. Recent studies, including functional brain scanning, have shown for all of us-- our brains seem to be hot-wired to perceive music on an emotional level.

It's the resulting positive effect that plays a large part in the healing process. Apart from seniors and those suffering from dementia, folks with autism, developmental disabilities, brain injuries or stroke can also benefit and after trauma, music therapy can help decrease pain and improve recovery time.

**Q.** Is one type of music more therapeutic compared to another?

**A.** The pitch, tempo or lyrics doesn't seem to matter as much therapeutically as long as its music that the individual likes

**Q.** How can people find a music therapist?

**A.** Accredited music therapists must complete university degree in music therapy and 1,000 hours of supervised internship.

You can find a therapist near you by going to the [Canadian Association for Music Therapy](#) website.

*With a report by CTV British Columbia's Dr. Rhonda Low*

Read more: <http://bc.ctvnews.ca/how-music-can-improve-your-emotional-health-1.383192#ixzz3Q3Puc6EL>