

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD)

A person with ASD has cognitive, motor or social challenges that often limit his/her global development or his/her well-being. He/she may have significant difficulties comprehending, communicating, remaining attentive, establishing relationships with others and expressing his/her emotions. Neurological troubles, syndromes or physical disabilities may also be present. It is therefore difficult for the person to accomplish daily activities independently or to interact with others. This may cause misunderstandings for the people in his immediate entourage and feelings of isolation, anxiety and loss of self-esteem and self-confidence for the person.

Music therapy maintains or improves various aspects of a person's development. The music therapist first identifies the client's needs and abilities in various areas by means of an Initial Assessment. These areas include socio-affective, motor and cognitive character, as well as his/her habits and musical preferences. An Individual Intervention Plan is then devised to include global objectives such as: developing his/her awareness of himself/herself and his/her environment, strengthening his/her self-esteem, expanding his/her verbal and non-verbal communication skills, social skills and his/her ability to express his/her emotions, improving the ability to pay attention to task, improving memorization skills, etc. The person then attends individual or group music therapy sessions depending on his/her needs and abilities.

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To attain these objectives, the music therapist employs a variety of methods and techniques that use music in all its forms. The communicative and creative properties of music are central to the client-therapist relationship and therapeutic interactions. The person may be invited to participate in vocal and/or instrumental improvisations, singing activities, movement to rhythm, song composition, listening to chosen pieces etc. A wide variety of instruments (guitar, piano, percussion instruments to name a few) are incorporated into sessions in order to satisfy individual musical preferences and to offer everyone a rich and meaningful experience. In short, music therapy is a useful means to reach a person who has Autism Spectrum Disorder and a way to support his/her development and maintain his/her well-being.

For additional information about music therapy or if you wish to communicate with a music therapist:

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