

SCHIZOPHRENIA AND DISORDERS WITH PSYCHOTIC FEATURES

Schizophrenia and psychotic disorders can cause distress, social isolation and changes in a person's perceptions. The person can have significant difficulties communicating, expressing his/her emotions and needs and reacting to those of others. It is often hard for the person to maintain his/her attention and to succeed in daily tasks. Facing the normal stresses of daily living can bring about anguish and disorganization.

Music therapy can maintain or improve the emotional and social well-being of a person. The music therapist first identifies the needs and abilities of the person in different areas by means of an Initial Assessment. These areas include the emotions, communication skills, cognition, as well as his/her habits and musical preferences. An Individual Intervention Plan is then devised that includes global objectives such as: recognizing signs of anxiety, developing reference points in his/her perception of reality, organizing his/her thoughts, improving communication with others, etc. The person then attends individual or group music therapy sessions depending on his/her needs.

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.

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The person may be invited to participate in vocal and/or instrumental improvisations related to a theme in his/her life, to compose song lyrics that express his/her emotions, to listen to a pre-composed song that evokes a familiar problem and/or to learn how to relax to music. A wide variety of instruments (guitar, piano, percussion instruments to name a few) are incorporated into sessions in order to satisfy each person's musical preferences and offer a rich and meaningful experience. Music can open a pathway to dialogue and can also communicate what is beyond words. In short, music therapy is a useful means to reach a person who is diagnosed with schizophrenia or a disorder with psychotic features and to contribute to his/her well-being.

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

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