



**Making the Case
for Personalized Music:
A Guide for Elder Care Professionals**

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Thank you for your interest in bringing personalized music to those in your care. With your help, we can bring the healing power of personalized playlists to many more elder care residents and clients who are struggling with a wide range of cognitive and physical impairments.

This guide is intended to help you make a persuasive case to bring our personalized music program to your care facility. We have found that care professionals like you make some of our most powerful and effective advocates. And we have learned from experience that those you care for, as well as you and your colleagues, will reap significant benefits.

Grounded in extensive neuroscience research about how our brains respond to music, tested and proven in hundreds of [MUSIC & MEMORYSM Certified Care Facilities](#), our personalized music system has helped thousands of residents, clients and the staff who care for them. Canadian researchers sum up our program's benefits this way:

- Those who have been silent or less communicative may begin to talk and become more social.
- Those who have been sad and depressed may feel happier.
- Those who have been less mobile may become more physically active.

The experience for many of our certified facilities has been transformative. The social environment is calmer and more congenial, families are happy to find their loved ones more engaged, and care professionals like you are able to spend more quality time with each individual. In short, Music & Memory's personalized music system is an important tool for promoting culture change in elder care facilities.

A Little Background

Music & Memory is all about bringing joy into the lives of people suffering from Alzheimer's, other forms of dementia and a wide range of cognitive and physical impairments.

Our approach is simple, elegant and effective: We train professionals in nursing homes and other elder care settings how to set up a personalized music program that integrates smoothly into the life of the care organization. Musical favorites tap deep memories not lost to dementia and can reawaken elders, enabling them to feel like themselves again, converse, socialize and stay present.

How MUSIC & MEMORYSM Began

Executive Director Dan Cohen founded Music & Memory with a simple idea: Someday, if he ended up in a nursing home, he wanted to be able to listen to his favorite '60s music. He'd heard a recent news report about how iPods have grown so popular. Why not bring used iPods as well as new ones into nursing homes to provide personalized music for residents?

When Dan had his brainstorm in 2006, he discovered that none of the 16,000 long-term care facilities in the U.S. used iPods for their residents. Drawing on his background in leveraging technology to benefit people who would otherwise have no access, he volunteered at a local nursing home in Greater New York, creating personalized playlists for residents. The program was a hit with residents, staff and families, and became the prototype for a bigger effort.

With funding from the Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation in 2008, Dan brought 200 iPods to residents of four New York long-term care facilities and tested the program on a larger scale. Successful outcomes spurred the creation of Music & Memory as a 501c3 non-profit in 2010.

Since then, we have implemented iPod personalized music programs in hundreds of care facilities throughout the U.S. and Canada. A 2011 matching grant outreach effort provided digital music players, headphones, music, training and support to qualifying facilities and has significantly helped to advance our mission.

In April 2012, a documentary about our work, *Alive Inside: The Story of Music and Memory*, was in the final stages of production. A [video clip of Henry](#), one of the residents featured in the film,

went viral with millions of views, boosting awareness and enthusiastic interest in our program. At the end of the month, the first version of the documentary was screened at the Rubin Museum of Art in New York City.

As word of the benefits of personalized music spread, in 2013, Wisconsin's Department of Health Services launched the Wisconsin Music & Memory initiative, enabling 100 nursing homes throughout the state to become MUSIC & MEMORYSM Certified Care Facilities and bring personalized playlists to their residents. Utah, North Carolina, Missouri, Alabama and other states are following in their footsteps, significantly expanding the reach of our program. The program is also being used successfully in hospice care, adult day care, assisted living, hospital and home health care.

Even more people have learned of Music & Memory since *Alive Inside* won the Audience Award for best U.S. Documentary at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival. The outpouring of interest and support for our work gives us great hope that our vision of personalized music as a gold standard of elder care will be realized.

The Healing Power of Personalized Music: Key Talking Points

The Brain-Music Connection

As we all know from hearing that song associated with a first love or the hits that were popular in our teen years, music is profoundly linked to personal memories. In fact, our brains are hard-wired to connect music with long-term memory.

Even for persons with severe dementia, music can tap deep emotional recall. For individuals suffering from Alzheimer's, more recent memory for things—names, places, facts—is compromised, but memories from our teenage years can be well-preserved.

Favorite music or songs associated with important personal events can trigger memory of lyrics and the experience connected to the music. Beloved music often calms chaotic brain activity and enables the listener to focus on the present moment and regain a connection to others.

The benefits of this form of music therapy have been well-studied and documented by distinguished researchers, including Music & Memory board member Dr. Connie Tomaino and

Dr. Oliver Sacks, author of *Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain*, co-founders of the Institute for Music and Neurologic Function.

Benefits of Personalized Music

Personalized music has many benefits for elders. Again and again, elder care professionals tell us that our program is often life-changing for everyone involved:

- Finally, professional staff have a way to give pleasure to persons with advanced dementia—often the most difficult to reach. Personalized music provides a means of communication and self expression when verbal language abilities are diminished.
- Musical favorites replace confusing environmental stimuli with something interpretable; personalized playlists distract from boredom or distress with a soothing, familiar experience.
- Personalized music offers an enjoyable, fulfilling activity for persons in dialysis, on vent or bed-bound.
- Individuals are more cooperative, attentive and willing to accept care; musical favorites decrease agitation and provide a distraction from fear and anxiety.
- Brighter moods boost staff morale and enable staff to be more person-centered.
- Because individuals are calmer and less agitated, sundowning is often reduced or eliminated. The music decreases wandering during mealtimes and restlessness.
- Individuals are more engaged with those around them.
- Family and staff are able to connect in a more meaningful way with residents around music and memories.
- Personalized music provides a valuable tool for the effort to reduce reliance on anti-psychotic, anti-anxiety and anti-depressant medications.

In the words of Tony Lewis, President and CEO of Cobble Hill Health Care in Brooklyn, N.Y., “Despite the enormous sums of money spent on mood- and behavior-altering medications that are often not particularly effective, nothing compares to these iPods when it comes to improving quality of life.”

The MUSIC & MEMORYSM Certification Program

While the concept of providing personalized music using iPods or other MP3 devices is straightforward and elegant, we've learned a great deal over the past few years about how to successfully implement our program in elder care facilities. As a result, we've developed a comprehensive certification program that teaches best practices for how to set up and manage a system for providing a personalized playlist for any resident or client who might benefit.

Our series of three 90-minute webinars, taught by Executive Director Dan Cohen, MSW, enables your team to create a facility-ready iTunes library, efficiently manage many resident playlists, handle equipment and security concerns, integrate personalized digital music into your daily care plans and evaluate the program's effectiveness.

Below is a summary of the program. You'll also find full details online at [MUSIC & MEMORYSM Certification Program](#). Please share this link with your colleagues.

Webinar I: Getting Started

- How those we care for benefit from personalized music
- How personalized music helps persons with Alzheimer's, dementia and other cognitive and physical challenges—the science behind the transformation
- What researchers have discovered about personalized music as a therapeutic tool
- Who should be part of your Music & Memory implementation team
- How to set goals and measure success for your personalized music program
- What are the boundaries of legal music sharing
- How to prevent loss and theft of equipment
- How the program benefits staff and boosts morale
- How to engage families and your community in promoting your personalized music program

Webinar II: Creating Personalized Playlists

- Understanding the iTunes Store
- The most efficient way to buy music on iTunes

- How to use your facility's collection of CDs and acquire additional music to set up and manage your iTunes library; how to keep it updated according to music industry standards
- How to create a totally customized playlist for each individual, even if she has no voice
- How interns and volunteers can add value to your program
- When and how family and staff should be involved to help with playlist creation
- How to update your library and ensure that the most appropriate music is easy to find and retrieve
- Going beyond the music: How to help individuals gain access to the Bible, audiobooks, podcasts, TV shows, movies and apps

Webinar III: Maximizing Benefits for Residents

- How to use the iPod shuffle
- How to copy music to the iPod
- Best practices for editing playlists and updating iPods
- How to introduce the program and equipment to residents, staff and families
- How to manage infection control and device storage
- Overview of support forms, policy guidelines, marketing materials and other resources in Music & Memory's Cloud storage

Bonus: A Full Year of Coaching Support to Ensure Your Success

As you and your professional team develop your pilot Music & Memory program, we will provide a full year of coaching support via regular conference calls and one-to-one consultations, as needed. Our goal is to ensure that your care facility launches a successful program that can be expanded over time to meet the needs of all.

As a MUSIC & MEMORYSM Certified Care Facility, you and your professional team will become part of our growing network. Benefits include:

- Designation as a recipient site for Music & Memory volunteers and iPod donation drives in your area
- Eligibility for non-profit facilities to receive donated iPods and iTunes cards that we obtain through our national collection drives
- Access to our Best Practices Resource Bank of marketing materials, forms, policies and procedures that have been tested and proven in our certified facilities

- Participation in and results from our program evaluation and assessment research; benchmark data and state-of-the-art best practices
- Listing as a MUSIC & MEMORYSM Certified Care Facility on our website, a great resource for families seeking care facilities that offer our program in their communities

Starter Kits for Non-Profit Care Facilities

The total cost of the MUSIC & MEMORYSM Certification Program is \$1,000, plus the cost of equipment, for a total of about \$1,600. Non-profit care facilities receive a \$600 starter kit **to help cover start-up equipment costs**, including 15 iPod shuffles, 15 headphones and AC adapters, and \$50 in iTunes gift cards.

Your certification training program includes:

- Orientation and training for your entire implementation team in a 4.5 hour course (three 90-minute webinars) taught by Music & Memory founding Executive Director Dan Cohen, MSW
- Regular conference calls to support your program for one year
- One-to-one consultation as needed for one year
- Individual proprietary facilities must supply at least 15 iPods to initiate training. Discounts are available for groups of facilities under the same ownership.

Upon successful completion of the training program, your facility will become a [**MUSIC & MEMORYSM Certified Care Facility**](#)—demonstrating to residents, clients and their families that you are at the forefront of person-centered care.

How to Gain Buy-in from Decision Makers

The biggest concern we hear from elder care facility leadership is this: Great program, but we don't have the time and/or budget to make a commitment. But those who have experienced the program first-hand make the opposite case. In fact, 100 percent of respondents from our Spring 2012 Staff Survey of our Certified Music & Memory Care Facilities said they would recommend our program to other nursing homes.

A Powerful Tool for Culture Change

Here's what we've learned: The hours and resources that you and your team invest in creating a Music & Memory personalized music program at your facility will be paid back as you enable residents to feel happier, more social, less anxious—just more able to enjoy life. Most residents

accept care more readily, and your facility will more easily meet and exceed goals to reduce use of anti-psychotic medications.

While there is no guarantee that any one individual will respond positively to the music (many factors determine outcomes, including choosing the right music, as well as the individual's personality), the vast majority of care facilities that have adopted our program report significant results for most of their residents.

Across hundreds of Certified Music & Memory Care Facilities, we hear the same feedback:

- As residents or clients listen to their playlists, you'll experience a mood shift: less agitation, fewer demands for attention.
- Staff and residents or clients enjoy a continuous flow of unexpected, positive outcomes.
- Individuals are calmer, engage in more appropriate social behavior.
- Staff feel energized and uplifted as once-remote individuals come alive and reconnect.
- Individuals look forward to listening to their iPods as a valued activity.
- Family and staff are able to connect in a more meaningful way with their loved ones around music and memories.
- A more peaceful social environment, where individuals are engaged in the personal, independent activity of listening to their own music, significantly frees up staff time and energy.

In short, **our personalized playlist system enables those you care for to regain a sense of their own individuality.** Nothing could be more important in the effort to transform the culture of elder care.

What Care Professionals Say

The most persuasive case for the therapeutic benefits of Music & Memory's personalized playlist system comes from those who have experienced it first-hand. In Spring 2012, we surveyed professional care staff in our Certified Music & Memory Care Facilities to find out how our program affected residents and the staff member's ability to care for them. Here are the key results:

- 100 percent of respondents said that **personalized music brought more pleasure to residents** most (74 percent) or all (26 percent) of the time.

- Just over two-thirds of respondents (68 percent) reported that **personalized music helped them to care for residents** most of the time. Another 9 percent said it helped all of the time.
- More than half (58 percent) said personalized music was substantially effective for many or all residents with **depression**.
- 71 percent of respondents said personalized music was substantially effective for many or all residents with **anxiety**.
- 62 percent of respondents said personalized music was substantially effective for many or all residents with **verbal and/or physical behaviors**.
- 53 percent of respondents believed that personalized music **can help reduce use of anti-psychotic medications**; another 44 percent responded that it may help.
- 100 percent of respondents said they **would recommend the program** to other nursing homes.

These results are visually summarized in our handout, [“Personalized Music: Nursing Home Effectiveness.”](#) Feel free to reproduce this handout to share with your colleagues and facility leadership.

At the back of this guide, you’ll find a handout of additional comments by survey respondents, detailing more specific observations of how personalized music has created positive outcomes for their residents. Please feel free to distribute.

A Magnet for Good Publicity

One of the most rewarding outcomes of our efforts has been positive publicity for our program and the facilities that participate. Reporters love to tell our story; the results for elders and their families are so uplifting that people want to spread the good news.

Here’s an excellent example of enthusiastic regional news coverage about our program’s success at [Bethany Village in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania](#). We encourage you to discuss this with the communications director of your facility, to explore promotional opportunities once you have completed the certification program.

On our website, www.musicandmemory.org, you’ll find more excellent videos and news coverage of our work that you can also share with members of your team. Take a look at all of

the media reports on [As Seen In](#), and don't miss the [video of Henry](#), which has gone viral with more than 10 million views, and counting!

Engaging Community Support

We've received an outpouring of worldwide interest in our program since the Henry video went viral in April 2012. Many people have asked us how they can get involved to help spread the therapeutic benefits of Music & Memory's personalized music program. We understand that our certification program may represent a significant investment for your facility. It also represents an opportunity to engage volunteers in your work, to help you raise funds, collect donated iPods and assist with training elders and staff to use the equipment.

Many elder care facilities have volunteer support groups made up of family and community members. Raising funds for a Music & Memory Certification Program can provide an energizing and engaging group project. For those groups interested in collecting new and gently used iPods for your facility, we also offer a free downloadable guide: [How to Run a Successful iPod Donation Drive](#).

Other groups that can help you with fundraising and iPod collections include religious youth groups, scout troops, Rotary chapters and other service clubs, area schools, as well as college and university service fraternities and sororities or service clubs. Speak with the individual responsible for coordinating volunteers at your facility to brainstorm ideas.

Through our website, www.musicandmemory.org, we are building a resource bank of community volunteers who want to help with fundraising, iPod collections and other work to promote our efforts. We'll be pleased to see if there's a match in your area to help with your fundraising.

We Look Forward to Hearing from You

We will be pleased to answer any questions you might have about adopting our personalized music system. Please be sure to share the information in this guide, the handouts and the explanation of our [MUSIC & MEMORYSM Certification Program](#) with members of your leadership team.

We look forward to helping you succeed with bringing the therapeutic benefits of personalized music to your care facility. Be sure to [contact us](#). Thank you



June 2012 Survey of Certified Music & Memory Care Facilities: Staff Comments

Q: Are there any positive outcomes you would like to share?

1. The personalized music program has provided evidenced based mood shifting and emotional stability for our residents who suffer from depression and anxiety. We also have many who are currently under music care due to their apparent behavioral issues and we are working to ensure they are provided the music that have been observed to assist in shifting their moods to a more positive level. The residents look forward in hearing their music and are even requesting to add additional selections as the music experience also helps in memory recall.
2. Reducing aggressive behavior and depression.
3. Patients with anxiety and depression are less agitated and appear calmer. The music transports them to a happier place in their minds. Patients who have chronic pain forget their pain while listening to music. Dementia patients appear more cognitive while listening to music. Overall, the patients using personalized music are given a better quality of life.
4. Our residents have improved mood, brighter affect, increased socialization, etc. They tend to verbalize and sing more after listening to their iPod.
5. It is wonderful to see the participants ask for their iPod from the staff like they would a glass of water. That is culture change!
6. Turns frowns into smiles, increases engagement. Just having the ability to offer as an intervention.
7. Most residents calm down and relax while listening to their personalized music.
8. A brighter affect, increased socialization, increased verbalization/vocalization, improved mood, decrease in restless behavior, increased cooperation with care.
9. Mrs. E. delights in her iPod—long term depression has been helped with music. Mr. E. uses his iPod at dialysis. He loves jazz and relishes his time with music. Several residents use theirs to go to sleep. I have a CNA who assists those residents in the evening. One of our stroke victims can verbalize clearly when singing to her iPod. Her normal speech is not easily understood. A resident who is paralyzed and can't speak smiles when listening to hers.
10. Residents with behavior problems showed significant improvement and appeared to enjoy the music at the same time were more cooperative with their care.

11. Yes, many :). We have had veterans burst into tears after receiving their iPod. Tears of joy. We have had a veteran with severe behavioral disturbances going to the bathroom with his iPod go right in.
12. Increased socialization. Reduced anxiety increased sense of well-being. Residents using iPods daily are happier. Short-term patients state the iPods help to reduce anxiety, reduce boredom, assist with relaxation and helps them to sleep.
13. At least three residents who were not eating well now listen to their iPod 30 min before meals and intake has improved. Resident who was resistance to cares now listens to iPod before cares and is more receptive to staff direction. Overall more upbeat and pleasant dispositions noted.
14. Yes
15. We have a resident who yells very loudly when we put her iPod on she relaxes within minutes.
16. Documented decrease in PRN anxiety medications. Currently trialing regular medication dose reductions in anti-anxiety, and depression, and insomnia medications since behaviors/moods have stabilized with introduction of iPods. Families have noticed mood changes. Caregivers are now asking for iPods for control group residents, as iPods are proving an effective diversion when giving AM care to combative residents. Have also found that residents that are on an oxygen compressor benefit because the compressor's noise is agitating or competing with other sounds. Helps resident drift off to sleep with compressor. Relaxes during the day because they are not confronted with compressor noise on a constant basis. Residents want to "share" their iPods because they are so thrilled and I hear "guess what they are singing now?". I especially enjoy seeing a particular resident wheeling down the hall doing what staff call "the wheelchair boogie" and singing to Roy Orbison (*Pretty Woman*) or Jerry Lee Lewis (*Great Balls of Fire*).
17. We have been introducing these to people with very advanced dementia and have seen a immediate response to the music. We also have a gentleman with little to no short-term memory seeking out the music.
18. Helped reduce boredom, helped change mood to positive, distracts residents from frequently asking for pain medicine.
19. They reduce PRN Ativan, per the question below.
20. Very effective when used by CNA's for ADL when behaviors are present. I would not say it that it reduces the use of Psychotropic medication but sometimes reduces the need for PRN medications.
21. One staff uses the iPod late in the day for resident with dementia who gets restless late in the day.
22. Residents have taken ownership of their music. It is wonderful to see their faces come alive when they hear music that is familiar and brings out a special memory!
23. Yes. One gentleman who had a diagnosis of failure to thrive actually gained weight and began taking an interest in the world after he started using the device. Another woman had her blood pressure reduced during times of personal care when the device was used.
24. All residents enjoy their personalized music, they look forward to listening to their music and also changing the playlist. Some residents enjoy their iPod during their dialysis sessions—puts a little some pleasure in a not so pleasurable procedure. Our CNAs report positive changes with residents who exhibit challenging behaviors during care.