



SELECTING EQUIPMENT FOR YOUR MUSIC & MEMORY® PROGRAM

Introduction

Choosing the right program equipment is an important step when launching a Music & Memory program. Typically, organizations begin with a pilot phase before expanding the program further. Before the pilot phase begins, you will need to select and acquire the necessary equipment for the participants involved.

We strongly recommend starting your pilot program with a small group, ideally no more than five participants, during the first few months of operation. This limited number allows you to focus on working closely with your first participants, and allows time for you and your team to hammer out program logistics, such as device storage and charging, and establishing hygiene protocols.

A good way to choose equipment is to think about, in a broad sense, what would be best for your program, and what meets the needs of your future program participants.



KEY QUESTIONS:

- Where will it be located?
- Who will have access?
- What is our budget?
- How's our WIFI?
- Do we need Bluetooth?



PARTICIPANT NEEDS

What kind of equipment would fit the needs of your participants? What would they be most comfortable with? How do they enjoy music now? As a starting point, we recommend MP3 players. These devices are lightweight, user-friendly, and cost-effective to replace. Their portability allows users to enjoy music on the go, ensuring it's readily available when needed or requested. MP3 players also facilitate the use of existing CD collections, allowing users to upload music from their own collections without having to purchase additional music files.

Pairing an MP3 player with headphones will create an immersive environment for the listener that will maximize results of the music. Headphones also minimize distractions for others, so they are a good option for people who share a room. If headphones are not available, or if the listener isn't comfortable using them, you can also purchase bluetooth enabled MP3 players that allow you to connect the player to a bluetooth speaker.

Hearing loss is also a consideration. Most seniors wear hearing aids, so if you intend to use headphones, you'll need a pair that covers the ear entirely. Keep in mind people may not need hearing aids when listening to music because the headphones may provide enough amplification for comfortable listening.





EXISTING EQUIPMENT AND COST

Existing Equipment

You may already have MP3 players (or Apple iPods) in use or in storage at your organization. Utilizing these existing devices as part of your program can help you avoid the expense of purchasing new equipment. However, it is essential that you are able to add and remove music from the devices. Some music players, especially older models like the Apple iPod (which has been discontinued since 2019), require an Apple computer for the task of adding and removing music files. If your organization does not have access to an Apple computer, these devices may not be usable. Additionally, the music stored on an Apple computer is linked to a password-protected Apple ID. If you don't have access to the login information for that Apple ID, you won't be able to access the music library stored on it.

Cost

If you are on a budget, we recommend you use MP3 players, which are cheap and easy to replace. Consider budgeting \$50-100 per participant; this amount covers the cost of an MP3 player, headphones, 15-20 MP3 files, and an optional bluetooth speaker (should the person not respond well to headphones).

For organizations interested in streaming or voice activated technologies (e.g Alexa), note this is generally more expensive, and it includes ongoing subscription fees. For example, Spotify's subscription rate is \$100 per year, per participant. Streaming hardware is also more expensive as it needs an operating system to run streaming apps (and the Alexa app if you want voice activated). If you are interested in streaming, we recommend you budget \$200 per participant for year one (\$100 for player, \$100 for streaming subscription), and \$100 per year per participant to cover the ongoing subscription cost.



STEP ONE: A DEDICATED COMPUTER

We recommend that you have a dedicated computer for your Music & Memory program, preferably a laptop for mobility. Having a dedicated computer ensures that you will have access to your music library at any time, which will be very helpful when it's time to work with participants. Listening to music together and discovering favorites is the first step with each participant, and being able to take the music to them will make the process much easier.

Most laptops built in the last five years will be able to handle the tasks required for your Music & Memory program, which includes either hosting a local MP3 library on the computer or accessing the internet to listen to a cloud-based music library like Spotify.

To help you create backups of your playlists, we recommend the laptop has printer access. In addition, if you plan to use CD's as part of your MP3 library, we recommend you purchase a laptop that has a CD drive, or purchase a remote CD drive.



KEY QUESTIONS:

- Is the hard drive big enough?
- Does it have WIFI?
- Can it import CDs?
- Can it connect to a printer?



STEP TWO: SELECTING MUSIC PLAYERS

When choosing a music player for your Music & Memory program, look for options that meet the needs of your participants, are cost friendly and easy to use.

MP3 Players

What most organizations adopt are portable MP3 players. Purchasing a number of these devices and pairing them with a local music library on a laptop is an easy model for delivering music in an efficient way that allows for scaling of your program over time. The devices are easy to track and store, and inexpensive to replace.



Recommended:

AGPTEK 8GIG MP3 Player

- 70 hours of playback time
- Works with Windows or Mac libraries
- No WiFi needed
- Supports up to 128GB
- Affordable!! [Get Pricing](#)



ABOUT MUSIC STREAMING

Streaming music is a popular way of listening to music that involves a paid subscription to a streaming music service, a downloadable app to listen to the streaming music service, and a device that can host the app. A wifi signal is usually how the music is streamed from the streaming music service to the app on the device.

Online streaming music services are generally subscription based, and offer subscribers access to a large catalog of music. Generally, one subscription is required for each person. The benefit of streaming is that it's easier to access the music to create and update playlists, which can save you time. Streaming libraries are also vast, so you will have no trouble finding the song you're looking for.

When choosing a streaming service, we recommend companies that offer the option to create a personalized playlist, like Spotify, Apple Music, or Amazon. Some streaming platforms like Pandora, while helpful, only offer favorite music radio and do not offer the ability to curate personalized music playlists.

There are also streaming services that are designed for healthcare staff to support a number of individuals with music. A great option is Vera Pro offered by Music Health, which provides a convenient dashboard for offering music to multiple participants.





STREAMING PLAYERS

Several types of devices allow you to access streaming music services, including some mobile devices, smartphones, tablets and laptops. Unlike MP3 players, these types of devices have operating systems that can connect to streaming services. Some streaming services require you to download an app onto the streaming player to use the streaming service.

Because streaming players require operating systems, they are generally more expensive, starting around \$100 for an inexpensive streaming device or smartphone, and rising in cost considerably for tablets and laptops.

Most streaming devices also require WIFI signal to work, so if you don't have a good wifi signal at your organization, streaming might not be a good option for you, unless you're using a streaming device that also works offline. Remember, anytime access to the music is the goal, and this includes transitioning between environments.



Recommended:

Spotify Mighty Vibe

- Streams both Spotify and Amazon
- Stores 1,000 songs
- Works offline!!!
- No phone necessary
- Bluetooth enabled
- Costly! Get Pricing



STEP THREE: HEADPHONES & SPEAKERS

Headphones make it possible to listen to music independently, and this is especially helpful when residents are sharing a room. When choosing headphones, look for options that sound good, are durable and inexpensive. Opt for lightweight, over-ear headphones with cushioned ear cups to minimize discomfort during prolonged use. Adjustable headbands are beneficial, ensuring a secure yet gentle fit.

Hearing loss is also a consideration. If you are working with someone who wears hearing aids and you intend to use headphones, you'll need to purchase a pair that covers the ear entirely so as to not interfere with the aid's microphone, which would cause feedback. Do not use earbuds if someone is wearing hearing aids. In addition, hearing loss varies, so it's important to understand someone's hearing ability when offering them their music. If you are unsure, check their records for a recent audiologist screening. A free hearing screening is also available at chcheating.org.

For hygiene purposes, headphones should never be shared, unless you're using replaceable ear-pad covers. These can be purchased in bulk and offer a budget-friendly way to share headphones.

Headphone splitters are an important addition to a music & Memory program. A splitter means that a resident and a caregiver can listen to music together, promoting a shared enjoyment of the music, and fostering a sense of connection.

If the person you're working with isn't comfortable wearing headphones, you can also use a small bluetooth speaker to offer the music. Devices like tablets, phones and laptops can send music wirelessly via bluetooth technology to a bluetooth speaker. Bluetooth speakers also foster a sense of connection, as caregivers and individuals can listen to the music together. Opt for portable, budget and user-friendly Bluetooth speakers that offer clear and immersive sound quality.

STEP THREE: HEADPHONES & SPEAKERS



Recommended headphones:

KOSS UR-5B (or UR series)

- Durable
- Sounds great
- Inexpensive [Get Pricing](#)
- Lifetime guarantee
- NOTE: buy [splitter cables](#) to listen along!



Recommended bluetooth speaker:

iHome IBT82

- Durable
- Sounds great
- Easy to connect via bluetooth
- Long-lasting battery
- Lightweight
- Inexpensive! [Get Pricing](#)



ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT OPTIONS



Recommended voice-activated device:

Amazon Echo Show

- Works with Amazon Unlimited
- Making playlists is easy with Alexa!
- Great for engagement
- Easy to make video calls
- Put favorite photos on display!
- Costly!! [Get Pricing](#)



Recommended tablet:

GrandPad

- Easy to use
- Simple navigation, colorful buttons, and large fonts
- Great for engagement
- Apps for calls, emails, photos, music, & games
- Live support 24/7 to answer questions
- Inexpensive! [Get Pricing](#)



STEP FOUR: CHOOSING A STORAGE LOCATION



Where you choose to store your equipment while it's not in use is an important consideration for your program. Generally, a convenient centralized location is established, such as a nurses office, which is open 24/7, that allows easy access to devices whenever they are needed. Keeping the devices charging in one centralized location allows for the placement of sign out sheets and other signage, and allows for easy monitoring of the equipment.

Some organizations opt to keep devices charging in residents' rooms or residential areas such as an activities space; this decentralized approach allows more immediate access to the music when it's needed. For example, some organizations keep the devices in drawstring bags on the backs of wheelchairs, allowing the music to be offered at a moment's notice.

Whichever option you choose, it's important to keep the devices charging at all times when they are not in use. This will ensure their availability when they are needed.



CLEARING AND CLEANING EQUIPMENT



Watch the video [Clearing and Cleaning your Music & Memory Equipment](#).

Keeping equipment clean is an important part of a music & memory program. As you pilot your program, you'll need to create a system for cleaning devices when they are not in use to ensure a safe listening experience for all participants. Use a cleaning solution consisting of 70% isopropyl alcohol and water, along with a microfiber cloth, to clean music players and cables, making sure to avoid getting the solution inside cable ports. In addition, some things should never be shared, such as headphones, unless you are using disposable earpads.

It is also important to remove all personal information from devices when they are no longer in use by a participant. If you're using an MP3 player, you can delete personal information in the Settings menu. If you're using an Apple iPod, plug the device into an Apple computer, open Apple Music, and click 'restore iPod' to reset the device to factory settings.

For more information on cleaning your equipment and removing personal information, watch our video, [Clearing and Cleaning Your Music & Memory Equipment](#).



FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

MP3 Players are the most economical approach to creating music playlists, but generally take the most time to set up and get going. Streaming players offer much faster access to playlists but 1. are generally more expensive, and 2. require WIFI to access the music (unless the player also works offline).

Mobility is key. Anytime access to the music is the goal, thus portable players should be considered first, using fixed position devices (home stereos, computers, stationary voice-activated devices) only as necessary or for those who would benefit from extra engagement.

It's not about the number of devices but how often they are used that makes the difference.

Support for Certified Organizations

Support for program equipment is free for all certified organizations. Our team is happy to meet with you to help decide what equipment is best for your program.

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