



BECOME A MUSIC & MEMORY AMBASSADOR



ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide provides instructions for soliciting an organization in your community on behalf of Music & Memory. For questions regarding this process, email carequestions@musicandmemory.org.

Our Story

Music & Memory trains healthcare professionals working in a wide range of healthcare organizations on how to create personalized music playlists for those in their care. We use digital music devices, such as iPods and other Mp3 players, to deliver the personalized music playlists. Musical favorites can provide relief in many different forms for residents participating in the program. For instance, music that is personal to an individual can help them access memories not lost to dementia, reawakening residents so they may communicate and feel like themselves again.

Our goal is to bring joy into the lives of people suffering from a wide range of cognitive and physical challenges. Through access and education, and creating a network of Music & Memory certified organizations, we aim to make this form of personalized therapeutic music a standard of care throughout the healthcare industry.

The Music-Brain Connection

As we all know, hearing the songs associated with a first love or a favorite movie causes a rush of emotions and memories. Music is profoundly linked to our personal history. 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 or other related dementias, recent memory for names, places, and facts may be compromised, but memory from their teenage years is well-preserved.

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

How Personalized Music Can Transform Lives

Grounded in extensive neuroscience research, tested and proven in thousands of Music & Memory certified organizations, our personalized music program has provided therapeutic benefits for thousands of individuals, clients and the staff who care for them. Again and again, health care professionals tell us 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 offers an enjoyable, fulfilling activity for persons on dialysis, on ventilators or who are bed-bound.
- Individuals are more cooperative, attentive and willing to accept care; their brighter moods boost staff morale and enable staff to be more person-centered.
- Because individuals are calmer and less agitated, sundowning (confusion and restlessness) is often reduced or eliminated.
- 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 antipsychotic 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.”*

You Can Help as a Music & Memory Ambassador

Armed with the facts about Music & Memory and how personalized music can make a positive impact, you’re now ready to spread the word as a Music & Memory Ambassador!

Chances are you’ve already got an organization in mind that you want to approach, but if you don’t, we recommend considering one that is within driving distance of your home. Despite our success, Music & Memory has only reached an estimated 2% of the 2.5 million individuals living in long term care, so it’s likely you’ll be able to find an uncertified organization in your area.

Once you have chosen an organization to approach, it’s time to make contact with them and set up an appointment to discuss the benefits of adopting the Music & Memory program:

Contact the Organization: Speak with either the organization’s Administrator, Director of Nursing, or Director of Therapeutic Recreation or Activities. Ask for an appointment to share a brief overview of Music & Memory and how personalized music can improve quality of life for elders. Explain that you’re a Music & Memory volunteer. Send them a link to the Music & Memory website:

www.musicandmemory.org

If they agree to meet, here are a few suggestions for your presentation:

Share the Benefits of Personalized Music: Each year, we learn more and more about the therapeutic benefits of personalized music, and outlining these positive outcomes for residents and staff will go a long way in helping busy administrators see the value of adopting our program. Familiarize yourself with these benefits so you can discuss at the right time:

- **Nutritional and Hydration Issues**
 - Because music activates cognition and speech, it helps residents recognize food, follow cues, chew and swallow.
 - Calming music can relieve anxiety generated by the eating experience.
- **Agitation and Anxiety**
 - Music focuses a person's attention on something recognizable, which reduces the feeling of being overwhelmed and confused.
 - It connects the person with positive memories, which has a soothing effect.
 - Music stimulates movement, a positive outlet for restlessness.
 - NOTE: the improved cognition and mood continue after the person stops listening to music.
- **Pain Relief**
 - Music brings pleasure, releasing opioids in the brain.
 - Happy memories distract from the pain.
 - Recipients move to the music. This relieves pain from stiffness and tightened muscles.
 - NOTE: Pain is a common reason for rejection of care and having music relieve or distract from pain can help residents be receptive to care.
- **Rejection of Care**
 - Helps people relax, experience pleasure, connect to positive memories, improve their cognition and communication.
 - Music improves the duration and intensity of concentration.
 - People are better able to follow cues, understand what is happening, relate to their care-giver, and feel safe.
- **Sleep**
 - Music helps relax tense muscles
 - It tunes one's mind to positive memories and emotions providing soothing comfort

- Decreases production of cortisol
- Reduces sympathetic nervous system activity, decreases anxiety, blood pressure, heart and respiratory rate
- **Mood and Depression**
 - Neurologist Oliver Sacks said that, “Music evokes emotion, and emotion can bring with it memory... it brings back the feeling of life when nothing else can.”
 - Music is pleasurable
 - It brings warm memories and connections, and self-efficacy.
 - It generates movement, engagement, cognition, and awareness.
- **Occupational, Speech and Physical Therapy**
 - Music before a therapy session activates cognition, communication, and auditory and visual perception, making it easier to follow cues.
 - Singing uses consonants and vowels, activating speech.
 - Musical rhythm generates body movement, reduces muscle tension and improves coordination.
- **Active Dying**
 - Hearing remains during active dying.
 - Music connects people to their identity, emotions, auditory and visual perception.
 - Music is a help to families as well.

Offer Videos: Videos are a quick and effective way to showcase the impact of personalized music and the value of adopting the Music & Memory program. We have a number of great videos online that are free for you to share:

- [The “Henry” Video](#) Meet Henry, who struggled with dementia for a decade and barely said a word to anyone—until Music & Memory set up an iPod program at his nursing home. (7 minutes)
- [Healing with Harmony: A Music & Memory Story](#) The Fund for NYC Health + Hospitals’ short film, *Healing with Harmony: A Music & Memory Story* beautifully captures Music & Memory’s positive impact on residents and staff. Music & Memory is consistent with the care that NYC Health + Hospitals provides, helping to create environments that are sensitive to residents’ needs and ensuring that all New Yorkers receive the care they deserve. (5 minutes)
- [Leadership: Get the Music & Memory Advantage](#) This short video makes a business case for adopting our program through testimonials from administrators of successful Music & Memory programs.

Share Research: There are a growing number of studies that support personalized music as a non-pharmacological tool for improving the lives of elders with Alzheimer's and dementia, and other cognitive conditions. When speaking with administrators, make sure to let them know that Music & Memory is an evidence-based program, and point them to specific studies on our website to support that claim, including:

- *Individualized Music Program is Associated with Improved Outcomes for U.S. Nursing Home Residents with Dementia* - This 2017 study by Brown University, published in [*The American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*](#), compares behavioral and psychological resident outcomes before and after implementation of the Music & Memory program. [Learn more](#)
- *Music Activates Regions of the Brain Spared by Alzheimer's* - This April 2018 study reports that "objective evidence from brain imaging shows personally meaningful music is an alternative route for communicating with patients who have Alzheimer's disease." The research, published by a team at University of Utah Health in Salt Lake City in [*The Journal of Prevention of Alzheimer's Disease*](#), demonstrates that familiar music may facilitate attention, reward and motivation, which in turn makes it more possible to manage emotional distress in Alzheimer's. [Learn more](#)
- *Music & Memory and Improved Swallowing in Patients with Advanced Dementia* - Swallowing, self-feeding and choking issues affect many people with advanced dementia, leading to serious health consequences such as dehydration, malnutrition and weight loss (change of status). This 2018 study, published in conjunction with Dr. Stephen Post of Stony Brook University in [*Dementia: The International Journal of Social Research and Practice*](#) presents data indicating Music & Memory's personal music intervention improves swallowing in individuals with advanced dementia, making eating easier and potentially diminishing reliance on feeding tubes and PEG intervention. [Learn more](#)

The largest study thus far is a National Institute of Aging \$3.7 million, five-year grant to Brown University's Center for Long-Term Care Quality and Innovation. This is a follow-up study to one Brown University completed which demonstrated a statistically significant impact of Music & Memory in reducing the use of antipsychotic medications as well as behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia.

Additional Tips

Do Your Homework: Before approaching an organization, make sure to first learn as much as you can about what they offer. You may find that they already have a personalized music program or something similar in place. Take note of these details so that you can be the most informed when you make your case.

Be Diplomatic: Remember, not every organization will be interested in adopting the Music & Memory program. Although most administrators and staff will agree that offering personalized music is a good idea, there will always be some that either cannot afford it, or simply don't wish to add another program to their existing list of credentials. If you experience this, it's important to be diplomatic and offer empathy for their situation. Never criticize or argue, and do your best to leave the meeting on a positive note. If you do this, they will be more likely to share the idea with others, and possibly reconsider at a different time!

Share Our Website: If you find yourself having to explain the Music & Memory program quickly, remember, if nothing else, sharing our web address www.musicandmemory.org will at least leave them with the ability to learn more. And feel free to borrow or copy any information from our website, including pictures, when assembling a presentation.

A Special Note for You

On behalf of all of us at Music & Memory, thank you for everything that you're doing to keep people living with Alzheimer's and dementia, and other cognitive conditions connected to the joy of favorite music. All of our success is due to passionate individuals like you who believe wholeheartedly in the power of music to help others. Thank you for helping to make a difference.

We look forward to hearing from you and helping you succeed as a Music & Memory ambassador! Please [contact us](#) through our website if you have questions.

Thanks again for your help, and good luck!

Music & Memory

Frequently Asked Questions

How does Music & Memory work?

Music & Memory trains care staff to work with people living with Alzheimer's and dementia to discover their favorite songs from when they were a teenager. These songs are then compiled to create a 20-40 song personalized music playlist, which is then offered to the individual with comfortable headphones as needed, usually for 30-minutes at a time, and used proactively such as before medical or family visits. The results of this simple process can be astounding.

What are some of the benefits of personalized music?

Each year, we learn more and more about the therapeutic uses of personalized music. Here are some examples:

Nutritional and Hydration Issues

- Because music activates cognition and speech, it helps residents recognize food, follow cues, chew and swallow.
- Calming music can relieve anxiety generated by the eating experience.

Agitation and Anxiety

- Music focuses a person's attention on something recognizable, which reduces the feeling of being overwhelmed and confused.
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- Music stimulates movement, a positive outlet for restlessness.

Pain Relief

- Music brings pleasure, releasing opioids in the brain.
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Rejection of Care

- Helps people relax, experience pleasure, connect to positive memories, improve their cognition and communication.
- Music improves the duration and intensity of concentration.
- People are better able to follow cues, understand what is happening, relate to their care-giver, and feel safe.

Sleep

- Music helps relax tense muscles
- It tunes one's mind to positive memories and emotions providing soothing comfort
- Decreases production of cortisol
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Mood and Depression

- Neurologist Oliver Sacks said that, "Music evokes emotion, and emotion can bring with it memory... it brings back the feeling of life when nothing else can."
- Music is pleasurable
- It brings warm memories and connections, and self-efficacy.
- It generates movement, engagement, cognition, and awareness.

Occupational, Speech and Physical Therapy

- Music before a therapy session activates cognition, communication, and auditory and visual perception, making it easier to follow cues and engage in therapy activities.
- Singing uses consonants and vowels, activating speech.
- Musical rhythm generates body movement, reduces muscle tension and improves coordination.

Active Dying

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Is there research around how personalized music helps participants and their caregivers?

Studies have shown that listening to pleasurable music can help reduce pain by more than 20 percent. Listening to music often results in decreases in agitation, anxiety, sleeplessness and depression. Personalized music can prevent distress, aid in the reduction of antipsychotic medications and even improve swallowing. Caregivers and family members enjoy more meaningful relationships with those in their care and use the music as a tool to ease transitions, avoid challenging behaviors and save time.

How does personalized music help memory loss? What does it mean for my

loved one who suffers from Alzheimer's or other types of dementia?

The part of the brain that processes music and memory is the last part of the brain to be affected by Alzheimer's, which is why people with this disease are unable to recollect what happened in the last hour but can remember the words to their favorite songs from childhood.

In fact, the part of the brain that holds memories of familiar music is co-located with the part of the brain that stores autobiographical memory. So playing familiar music will spark those associated memories, "awakening" the individual, even if it's for a short moment. Research indicates that although this is no cure for Alzheimer's, regular listeners of personalized music will be more alert, engaged and conversant. Personalized music offers many benefits for its listeners.

Does this always work?

Personalized music does not always generate these results, but it does work most of the time. Success depends on identifying someone's favorite music from their youth. It's also worth trying at different times of day or week and around different activities.

How much does a music device, headphones and music usually cost?

The average cost of an MP3 Player is \$49, and the average cost of music is .99 cents a song or \$10 for a whole CD. Headphones vary in price but some models can be as little as \$2.99.

How else can I help?

Please visit the Music & Memory website www.musicandmemory.org for more information on how you can support efforts to make access to personalized music a standard of health care.