



Central Queensland MUSIC THERAPY

Music Therapy Q&A

This document aligns with the three Central Queensland Music Therapy brochures, also available on our website: <https://cqmusictherapy.com.au/about-music-therapy/>

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Part 1: What is Music Therapy?

How can participants and families get the most out of music therapy sessions?

What is Music Therapy?

Music therapy is a research-based, allied health profession that uses music and other therapeutic resources to actively support people as they aim to improve their health, functioning, and well-being. It can help people of all ages to manage their physical and mental health, and enhance their quality of life.

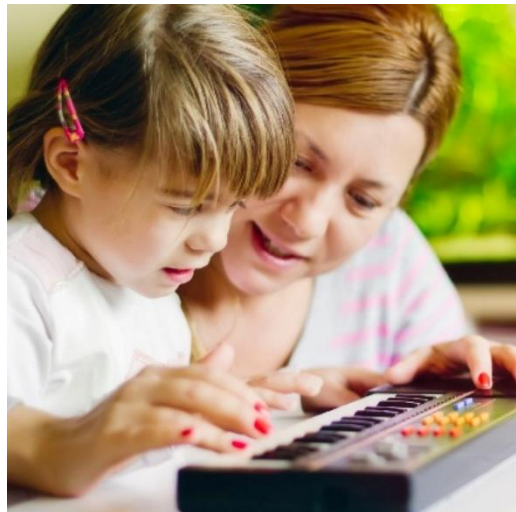
You don't need to be musical to take part in or benefit from music therapy. Qualified music therapists plan and provide musical and non-musical experiences for their participants. Each session is tailored to the needs and goals of the participant.

What is a Music Therapist?

A Registered Music Therapist (RMT):

- ✓ Has completed a Masters of Music Therapy degree
- ✓ Is registered with the Australian Music Therapy Association (AMTA)
- ✓ Abides by the AMTA's Code of Ethics
- ✓ Completes ongoing professional development

RMTs, unlike music teachers or performers, use music to address participants' developmental, social, emotional, physical, and physiological goals.



They occasionally address musical goals, like learning to play an instrument, when the benefits would be useful to improve a non-musical aspect of someone's health, functioning, and well-being.

They also collaborate with individuals and families to achieve their goals by activating and changing neurological pathways. Human brains are activated in multiple areas across both sides of the brain when exposed to music.

What does a Music Therapy Session Look Like?

The music therapy session can look structured, playful, calm, or even chaotic! It depends on the participant, the program, the mood of the participant on the day, and other factors.

The music therapy space is not a classroom, and the therapist is not a teacher. Children and adults come to music therapy to address goals around a developmental delay, behavioural issues, emotional regulation, trauma, mental health, etc. The therapist needs to be able to see how these areas of need present in real life, to help support growth and change.

This can be hard for parents and carers who are used to their child being expected to pay attention, sit still, etc. It can also be confronting and confusing for adults who are used to certain social expectations in terms of communication and emotional regulation.

In Summary, This Means

It's okay if you or your child is not playing, or is playing 'incorrectly'. The music therapist is usually looking for something else that doesn't require good technique or assessing your or your child's ability to play. The therapist will help play technique if required.

It's okay if you or your child is not showing 'good' or 'acceptable' behaviour. The role of the music therapist is to meet you or your child's mood and work within an environment that is safe to address the goals. If you or your child is exhibiting behaviours that may be perceived as 'negative', they might not be feeling safe or in control. It is up to the therapist to adjust their behaviour to help you or your child want to exhibit feelings of safety, not the other way around.

How to Support the Process

Following the below recommendations will help the participant get the most out of their music therapy program:

- Support the participant to attend the session independently, unless invited in by the therapist or participant for collaborative work or feelings of safety
- Follow the music therapist's lead and any instructions when in a session
- Refrain from correcting behaviour or musical technique
- Be open to receiving information, resources, suggestions, and recommendations from the therapist

Part 2: What can Music Therapy Do?

How can music facilitate change in functional goals and wellbeing?

What can Music Therapy Do?

Music therapy can facilitate change in:

- Social skills
- Pain management
- Executive functioning
- Speech and communication
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Emotional understanding and response
- Memory, attention, cognitive functioning
- Motor skills, movement, coordination, and physical function
- ...and more!



The following examples are just some of the ways that Registered Music Therapists use musical activities and interventions to support participants – from children to adults – in various areas as listed above.

Domain	Therapeutic Approach
Social Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging in joint activities with the therapist or a group of participants • Turn-taking in musical improvisations • Call-and-repeat or fill-in-the-blank singing or instrument playing • Follow-the-leader activities, giving participants the opportunity to lead as well as follow
Communication Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greeting songs for social communication • Joint singing for speech production and verbal communication • Action songs and Key Word Sign to music, for gestural communication • Instructional songs for receptive communication • Musical expression via improvisation
Emotional Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathy drumming for music-based emotion recognition, expression and communication • Emotion-themed songs, such as “Happy and you Know it”, followed by discussion • Music-based regulation strategies/tools • Personal playlisting for emotional processing, expression and regulation
Cognitive Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Musical Executive Function Training (MEFT) rhythm activities • Impulse control songs, such as “Sleeping Bunnies” or “Clapping, Clapping, Stop” • Lyric substitution and lyrical songwriting • Listening to or playing the participant’s preferred repertoire to increase focus, attention, motivation and engagement
Physical Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playing small percussion, piano, guitar or ukulele for fine motor development • Dancing and movement to music for gross motor development, including balance and coordination • Drumming activities to improve bilateral movement and crossing the midline • Using instruments in unconventional ways, such as a drum as a target for bean bag toss, or lollipop drums as tennis racquets, to improve throwing, catching, and coordination skills

Mental Health and Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring and expressing difficult topics and themes in a non-threatening way through music, such as lyric analysis • Emotional understanding, processing and expression via songwriting and/or instrumental improvisation • Personal playlisting for emotional awareness and regulation, using the Iso Principle (meeting and matching your mood, then creating a shift using music) • Joint drumming or group drum circles, facilitated by a music therapist
Activities of Daily Living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personalised songwriting to help learn and remember steps/processes such as getting ready in the morning, catching the bus, or cooking a meal • Playlist creation to support regulation during stressful or difficult activities

“RMTs Change Lives” Campaign

In 2016, AMTA launched a campaign, *RMTs Change Lives*, to raise awareness of the profession of music therapy, and bring greater understanding of how and why RMTs change the lives of Australians every day.

To illustrate how RMTs change lives, AMTA created a series of six animated videos and supporting interviews with RMTs – each based on a different case study from varying health sectors. To watch these videos and learn more about music therapy, visit:

<https://www.austmta.org.au/consumers-resources/campaigns/>

Part 3: Who can Benefit from Music Therapy?

Which ages, populations and health concerns can be supported?

Who can participate in Music Therapy?

Central Queensland Music Therapy provides services for all age demographics:

- Early childhood
- Children
- Adolescents
- Adults
- Older adults

Music therapy can help support people who might be experiencing challenges or wishing to improve their well-being. This may include (but is not limited to):

- Neurodivergence (e.g. ASD & ADHD)
- Physical and intellectual disabilities
- Mental health concerns (psychosocial disabilities)
- Trauma (e.g. birth trauma, survivors of DV, veterans)



Where can Music Therapy take place?

Music therapy services can be provided at:

- Music therapy-specific clinics
- Allied health practices
- Private practice
- Hospitals and healthcare settings
- Schools and childcare centres
- Residential aged care homes
- Palliative care facilities
- Disability care facilities
- Community centres
- Prisons
- Telehealth and mobile services

Central Queensland Music Therapy offers sessions at:

- Our music therapy office
- Participant's home
- Participant's school
- Community environment (e.g. park)
- Online via telehealth

Multidisciplinary Work

Music therapists can work closely with your family, carers and other health professionals such as:

- Occupational therapists
- Speech pathologists
- Physiotherapists
- Psychologists
- Psychiatrists
- Neurologists
- Doctors



Music therapy can also be used in hospitals and health care centres to help patients deal with stress, discomfort and pain. It is used to help patients who have:

- Cancer and diseases of the blood and bone marrow
- Advanced diseases that have little or no chance of cure or recovery
- Experienced a stroke or brain injury
- Mental health illnesses
- Had surgery or other medical procedures

What to Expect

A music therapy session occurs face-to-face either in person or online via telehealth. Music therapists use a range of music therapy methods and approaches, and tailor each session to the needs of the person. A session may include:

- Listening to music played by the music therapist
- Listening to recorded music
- Making music by playing an instrument or singing
- Using or writing lyrics and songs
- Moving your body to music
- Getting resources and activities to do outside of your music therapy session
- Many other music-based activities that ultimately target a non-musical goal

Am I Musical Enough?

Participants do not need any prior musical experience to be able to engage in or benefit from music therapy!

Registered Music Therapists create personalised programs to suit individual's needs and goals. This includes taking into consideration the participant's:

- Preferred repertoire
- Strengths and barriers
- Hobbies and interests
- Environmental factors/backgrounds
- Reason for referral
- Personal goals



Part 4: Where Can I Find More Information?

How can I contact a Music Therapist?

How Can I Contact Central Queensland Music Therapy?

Contact us for more information about music therapy and the services we offer at Central Queensland Music Therapy:

Phone: 0493 294 405

Email: admin@cqmusictherapy.com.au

Website: cqmusictherapy.com.au

Alternatively, find us on social media:

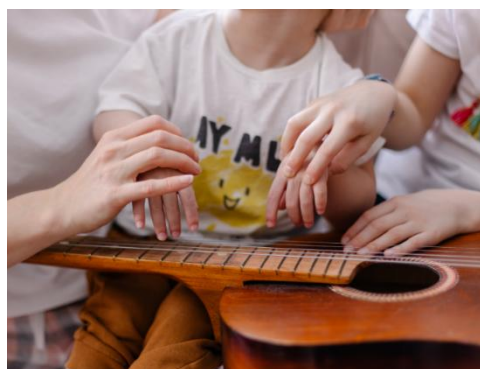
FaceBook: facebook.com/cqmusictherapy

Instagram: [@cqmusictherapy](https://www.instagram.com/cqmusictherapy)

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/company/cqmusictherapy](https://www.linkedin.com/company/cqmusictherapy)

How Can I Learn More about Music Therapy?

The Australian Music Therapy Association (AMTA) has much more information about music therapy in Australia, including campaigns, resources, research, and their very own Open Access journal – the Australian Journal of Music Therapy (AJMT).



Visit their website to explore music therapy news, resources and further information:

<https://www.austmta.org.au/>

You can also find a music therapist using the AMTA's online directory:

<https://www.austmta.org.au/find-an-rmt/directory/>