



Health Career Directory

Music Therapist

Overview:

Music therapy is the skilful use of music and musical elements by an accredited music therapist to promote, maintain, and restore mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health. Music has nonverbal, creative, structural, and emotional qualities. These are used in the therapeutic relationship to facilitate contact, interaction, self-awareness, learning, self-expression, communication, and personal development. Music therapy is used with individuals of various ages, abilities, and musical backgrounds.

Music therapy is used with individuals of various ages, abilities, and musical backgrounds in institutional, community, and private practice settings. This includes, but is not limited to:

- acquired brain Injury
- AIDS
- autism and other pervasive development disabilities
- critical care
- developmental disabilities
- emotional traumas
- geriatric care
- hearing Impairments
- mental health
- neonatal care
- obstetrics
- oncology
- pain control
- palliative care
- personal growth
- physical disabilities
- speech and language impairments
- substance abuse
- teens at risk
- victims of abuse
- visual Impairments.

*Source: Canadian Association for Music Therapy / Association de Musicothérapie du Canada
Annual General Meeting, Vancouver, British Columbia, May 6, 1994*

Who is suitable to be a Music Therapist?

Music Therapists are most effective when they have the following skills and characteristics:

- interest in music therapy, harmony, and improvisation skills
- ability to do solo and ensemble playing, composition, and conducting
- excellent music skills
- caring, compassionate, dependable, ethical, creative, and mature
- ability to remain patient and helpful with people who experience trauma
- strong communication and social skills
- ability to work independently, as part of a self-organizing team, and in collaboration with an interdisciplinary team
- physically fit.

They should enjoy:

- working one on one with patients and in groups to provide therapeutic support in acute, rehabilitation, and/or continuing care settings
- genuine interest in caring for people
- working one on one with people who are unwell or who are trying to change
- using standard and specialized equipment to gather assessments to provide proper care, and the performance of components, assemblies, and systems.

Who Employs Music Therapist?

Music therapist works in a variety of settings such as:

- primary care clinics
- hospitals
- schools
- residential treatment centers
- long-term care facilities
- community centers
- correction facilities/prisons
- shelters
- social services
- palliative care and hospice
- forensic units
- mental health and social service agencies
- private practices

In BC, Health Authority/Employers employ music therapists. They mostly work day shift hours, and they may also work on weekends.

Salary

Salary ranges from \$28.14 - \$35.10 per hour

Required Training and Education to Become a Music Therapist

To become an accredited music therapist (MTA) you must complete a Bachelor and a Graduate certificate in music therapy and 1000-hour supervised clinical internship.

University course work consists of supervised clinical fieldwork placements, and academic study in the areas of: music therapy research, music, and psychology.

During the internship, the music therapy intern combines their knowledge and skills in music therapy, develops competence with one or more clinical populations, and gradually takes on the full range of responsibilities of a professional music therapist. Following the internship, the intern submits a written portfolio about their music therapy philosophy, internship experience, and case study. Upon approval from the Canadian Association of Music Therapist (CAMT), the intern is given the title Music Therapist Accredited, (MTA).

Career Advancement

Most music therapists stay in clinical practice for long periods of time as they enjoy providing one on one care to their patients. However, for those who seek further career advancement, Music Therapist can move to management roles, clinical specialist roles, or leadership roles within their workplace environment. It is also possible to get a Masters and Doctorate Degree in Music Therapy in order to teach at Universities that provide creative arts therapy specialties.

Resources

Education Programs

Capilano University
<http://www2.capilanou.ca/programs/music-therapy.html>

Canadian Mennonite University
<http://www.cmu.ca/>

University of Windsor
<http://www.uwindsor.ca/music/>

Wilfred Laurier University
Bachelor of Music Therapy and Master of Music Therapy
<http://www.uwindsor.ca/music/>

Acadia University
<http://www2.acadiou.ca/index.php>

Concordia University
<http://www.concordia.ca/>

Financial assistance and bursaries

For information about Canada student loans and grants, please visit:
http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/learning/canada_student_loan/index.shtml

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Scholarship and bursaries specific to art therapy students please visit:
<http://catainfo.ca/cata/study-at/>

Associations

Music Therapist Association of BC
<http://www.mtabc.com/>

Canadian Association of Music Therapist
<http://www.musictherapy.ca/>

Institute for Music and Neurologic Function
<http://musictherapy.imnf.org/>

Music Therapy World
<http://www.musictherapyworld.net/WFMT/Home.html>

Laurier Center for Music Therapy Research (LCMTR)
<http://www.soundeffects.wlu.ca/>

Canadian Music Therapy Trust Fund
www.musictherapytrust.ca