

Music Therapy

I. Definition:

A Board-Certified Music Therapist (MT-BC) uses instruments, rhythm, and melody to work on prosody (speech rhythm and intonation), breathing, vocabulary, and other speech elements.

The therapist collaborates with your SLP to integrate music-based activities that support specific therapy goals.

Music therapy sessions might include singing exercises for breath support, rhythmic cueing for motor speech disorders, or melodic intonation therapy for aphasia. The structured nature of music provides scaffolding for speech production.

II. Who may benefit :

- ✓ Children and adults with dysarthria
- ✓ Patients with childhood apraxia of speech
- ✓ Those with articulation and phonological disorders
- ✓ Adults recovering from aphasia
- ✓ Children with stuttering
- ✓ Patients with selective mutism
- ✓ Those with auditory processing disorders
- ✓ Children with autism and other developmental disorders

III. Science's view:

Music therapy has the strongest research support among the complementary modalities discussed here. Studies show music activates similar neural networks as speech and language processing.

A 2015 Cochrane systematic review found music therapy, particularly melodic intonation therapy, improved speech recovery in aphasia patients.

Research published in *BMC Complementary and Alternative Medicine* demonstrated positive effects on language skills in children with delayed speech development. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) recognizes the value of SLP-music therapist collaboration for neurological speech impairments, particularly when evidence-based techniques like melodic intonation therapy are employed.

Many practitioners and researchers consider music therapy an evidence-based approach, though some call for larger, more diverse studies to establish specific protocols for different conditions.

IV. Safety Considerations:

Music therapy is considered very safe with virtually no contraindications. The main consideration is ensuring the music therapist is board-certified (MT-BC) and experienced in working with speech disorders.