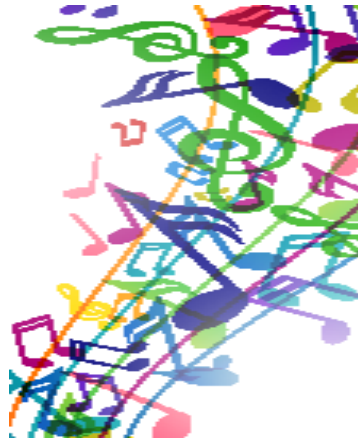


Scottish Borders Learning Disability Service

Arts Therapies Service



**Information for
Family members, carers & support staff**

Who are the Arts Therapies?

The umbrella term 'arts therapies' encompasses different professions, which include: music therapy, art psychotherapy, dramatherapy.

The arts therapies are an established psychological clinical intervention delivered by Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) registered arts therapists who work with people whose lives have been affected by injury, illness or disability to support their psychological, emotional, physical, communication and social needs.

In the Learning Disability Service, we currently offer music therapy, but have art and dramatherapy student placements from time to time.

What is music therapy?

Music therapy is a relationship focused, dynamic, evidence-based psychological therapy. It can help people to work through challenges or difficulties within a safe and supportive therapeutic relationship. Music therapy provides a safe space for the expression and regulation of emotions without the need for words. In this way, music therapy can help a person to:

- experience themselves and others in different ways
- find an alternative way of expressing thoughts and feelings
- explore identity and sense of 'self'
- work without words
- have an embodied experience of their feelings and emotions
- gain new insights
- make use of the art form beyond therapy to sustain well-being

An arts-based approach can be more accessible and less threatening for some people. Engaging in creative processes can also boost motivation and confidence and so improve engagement in therapy.

What happens in the sessions?

Music therapy is person-led and so each session may look very different. There is a loose structure to the sessions and appointment times are kept to the same schedule every week. Over time this consistency can help a person to feel more safe and secure within the therapy space.

The therapist supports the person to engage musically in a variety of ways. This might be exploring different sounds through the improvised use of musical instruments and voice, or it might involve song-writing or active listening. This shared musical interaction helps to build a therapeutic relationship between the person and the therapist through which a person can begin to learn more about themselves. Exploring music in a relational way can help a person to express and regulate their emotions. It can also help them to build their confidence and experience a sense of agency. Sometimes talking about the music can bring a deeper understanding about difficulties that the person might be facing.

Why music therapy?

By using an arts-based approach, music therapy is accessible to anyone. It is also important to note that you do not need to have had any experience with music in the past. Music therapists work in a holistic way and therefore can support a broad range of needs including: psychological, emotional, social, physical, sensory.

A person may be referred to music therapy if they have experienced:

- a major life event or transition
- a bereavement
- trauma
- mental health difficulties
- relationship difficulties
- social anxiety

Music therapy can also be beneficial where there are concerns about changes in a person's presentation or day-to-day engagement in their home or supported environment.

Music therapists can work on a 1-1 basis or with groups. They can also work with staff teams or families to bring new insights about a person.

How long will it take?

Music therapy happens over a period of time. The music therapist will arrange a first meeting with the person and a family member or support worker to ask some questions about:

- their life history
- their current difficulties
- confidentiality and consent to share information

There are then 2-3 sessions to look at what the person's needs might be and to establish how music therapy might help. If appropriate, a block of therapy will be offered and the therapy is reviewed at intervals.

Where does music therapy take place?

There is a central music therapy base at Galavale House, Tweed Road in Galashiels. There are good bus links to the service. The therapy team can also see people in other places across the Borders.

What can I do to support the person being referred?

For music therapy to help it is essential that the person is supported to attend their therapy appointments on a regular basis. There can be planned breaks for holidays and there may be times when the person or the therapist has to cancel due to illness or other unforeseen circumstances. NB: It is important to note that if 2 or more weeks are missed without letting the service know, the person may be discharged.

Once a person is in therapy you may observe a change in their mood. This can be a very normal part of the therapy process. It is important to remember that although music is involved, it does not mean that sessions are always 'enjoyable'. You can support the person by offering reassurance after a session and avoiding lots of questions.

The therapist will liaise with other professionals when necessary and is legally required to keep a record of sessions on an electronic database (EMIS). Only professionals involved in the person's care are allowed access to these records.

How are music therapists trained?

Music therapists:

- are highly skilled musicians
- have a post-graduate Masters Degree in music therapy
- must be registered with Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)
- must have regular clinical supervision
- follow strict guidelines on confidentiality & data protection

How do I make a referral?

A referral can be made via the Learning Disability Service referral form.

You can access this by phoning the **Learning Disability Service** on **01835 340 610**.

Another professional who may be involved in the person's care can also refer.

For further information about Music Therapy visit: www.bamt.org

If you have any further questions, please contact:

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NHS Extension Building SBC HQ,
Newtown St Boswells, Melrose TD6 0SA.
Tel: 01835 340 610