

Nondrug Pain and Symptom Management

MUSIC

MUSIC therapy: Listening to (or playing) music as a form of enjoyable distraction. Research indicates that listening to a person's preferred style of music can:

- Reduce pain
- Lower blood pressure, heart rate, and respiratory rate

Older adults may enjoy:

- Listening to their favorite type of music
- Singing hymns or other favorite songs
- Harp music
- Playing piano, guitar, or other instruments
- Dancing
- Watching children playing instruments or singing

What you can do:

- Explore with the person what are his/her musical preferences and experiences with music
- Document your findings, sharing with the rest of the health care team
- Advocate for the person to have access to the items or opportunities necessary for using their preferred music strategies as a form of nondrug pain management. A CD/MP3 player with headphones and a variety of musical options is needed.
- Consider care-planning a trial of encouraging and assisting the person to listen to music routinely (two or three times a day) for a short period of time (3-4 days) and document your findings.
- Ask the person prior to beginning each session what their pain/tension level is on a 0-10 scale and then again at the end of the use of the music session. Adjust the trial as needed so as to optimize the intervention.
- If it is effective, care plan it permanently, so that all caregivers can encourage the use of this nondrug technique.

Adapted from Beth Miller-Kraybill, *Nondrug Pain & Symptom Management in Nursing Assistant End-of-Life: Computerized Educational Program*.

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Reference: Swedish Medical Center. *Nursing Assistant End-of-Life: Computerized Educational Program*. Pittsburgh, PA: Hospice and Palliative Nursing Association; 2006.