

# Music Therapy

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In this section I have explained a little about my work as music therapist.

## **Rationale.**

My groups are workshop-based, using voice, a variety of drums, percussion instruments, guitar, flute and piano. Although the course is slanted towards adults who have learning disabilities, the group is able to accommodate people with differing communication skills, this includes older learners and people with learning difficulties. Each session is designed to meet each particular groups needs, and has a basic structure, which creates an atmosphere of security and continuity. Using this safe structure, members are supported to take risks in how and what they communicate, and are encouraged to work creatively and experientially at an emotional level.

It is intended that the experience of being in this group will strengthen the student's ability to judge social situations, act appropriately and successfully communicate their needs. All interactions with others will be seen as opportunities for mutual learning - giving value to the process as well as to the task itself.

## **Additional Information.**

I have keyboards and a collection of interesting percussion instruments which I use in my sessions and members often discover musical talents and abilities that have been buried for many years. Playing and singing together is a therapeutic for us all and there are also the physiological benefits. When you sing or shake a tambourine, your heart rate increases as does the amount of oxygen in the blood all, of which encourages feelings of well being.

In keeping current emphasis on skills for life based courses and would like to highlight how fundamental music making, in all its forms, is to these aims. People who have communication problems are often withdrawn and immobile, their self confidence having been frozen by their experience of life. To see a member blossom as they sing or play a solo - which they never thought they could do – and to receive the approval and support of their peers is to witness the emergence of that confidence. This is the same self belief can then be used to help members gain some a sense of control of their life, from speaking up in other groups and take part in activities outside the centre, to looking for a paid employment. The skills learnt in the Musical Connections group such as listening, concentrating, turn-taking, solo work, supporting, creating, initiating, compromising, and sometimes conceding, all play an essential part in day to day communications.