**Musical Memories Resource Guide**

**Articles** - discover the link between music, memory, and health.

[Music Therapy Ireland](http://musictherapyireland.com/services/music-therapy-adults/) – the basic concepts and ideas behind music therapy and the many ways it can help improve health, especially in elderly patients or patients who have dementia or traumatic brain injury. <http://musictherapyireland.com/services/music-therapy-adults/>

Article Highlights:

“Music therapy enhances communication, social interaction, memory recall and reduces anxiety and confusion. Music Therapy also helps with Impairments in: Cognition, Social skills, Motor ability, and Communication. Music therapy has been used in rehabilitation settings to stimulate brain functions involved in cognition, emotions, speech, sensory perception and movement”

“Music Therapy helps through reminiscence (detailed memories, sense of identity), as it allows the client to express his/her own identity by eliciting autobiographical memory. It is also an important way to cope with the stress of aging, death or physic/psychic failures, as it eliminates anxiety, depression and feelings of isolation”

“Structured activities can make people more comfortable as they can participate in structured music therapy sessions for up to 30 minutes, even when cognitive, social, and physiological abilities continue to deteriorate. Song writing for self-expression is ideal to meet the patient’s bio-psychosocial and spiritual needs. Instrument playing is useful for fine and/or gross motor skills enhancement, promoting feelings of achievement and self-esteem.”

[Psychology Today – Mental Mishaps Blog](http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/mental-mishaps/201105/music-evoked-nostalgia)

*Music-Evoked Nostalgia – Why Do Certain Songs Send Us Back?*

By Ira Hyman, Published May 6, 20011 at <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/mental-mishaps/201105/music-evoked-nostalgia>

Article Highlights:

“I found myself falling through my memories backwards in time after hearing a song from my high school days. A single song made me feel like I was 18 again while reminding me that I'm substantially older. For me, music can induce nostalgia quickly and easily.”

“Sometimes, as in my case, a song would evoke a general recollection - a memory for a life period such as high school, or college, or dating that certain someone from long ago. Other times, songs brought to mind specific recollections of particular events…….What I found really interesting is that songs often evoked memories that were general rather than specific - the feeling of high school rather than a specific event; your time with someone rather than a single date. In a word, the songs evoked nostalgia.”

[AgingWell Magazine](http://www.agingwellmag.com/news/story1.shtml)

Music Therapy in Dementia Treatment — Recollection Through Sound

By Juliann Schaeffer at <http://www.agingwellmag.com/news/story1.shtml>

Article Highlights:

“People of all ages relate to and enjoy music, making it a universal language, of sorts. However, its value can go far beyond simple listening.”

“Music is used with older adults to maintain or increase their levels of physical, mental, social, and emotional functioning. Music used as a sensory and intellectual stimulation can help maintain a person's quality of life or even improve it. Although music therapy is used for people of all ages, it is especially beneficial for older persons with dementia who may be unable to communicate in another way.”

[Discover Magazine](http://discovermagazine.com/2009/the-brain/26-music-melody-strange-pull-they-exert-over-our-minds)

Music, Melody, and the Strange Pull They Exert Over Our Minds: cognitive scientist Matthew Schulkind knows "earworms" inside and out—especially those spawned by the Wiggles.

Matthew Schulkind is interviewed by Shannon Sweeny for the March 26, 2009 issue at <http://discovermagazine.com/2009/the-brain/26-music-melody-strange-pull-they-exert-over-our-minds>

[ABC News – Tech This Out](http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/story?id=97835&page=1#.T5GQhqvY-W0)

Scientist Learning How Music May Prevent Dementia

By Lee Dye published January 23, 2012 at

<http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/story?id=97835&page=1#.T5GRHqvY-W1>

[Nova: Music and Memory Podcast](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/body/alzheimers-music-au.html)

By Rebecca Cheung published September 30, 2010

Audio Podcast and written transcript available at

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/body/alzheimers-music-au.html>

**Web Resources**

[SongLyrics](http://www.songlyrics.com) – searchable database of song lyrics. This site has a decent collection of lyrics for the oldies. [http://www.songlyrics.com](http://www.songlyrics.com/)

[eHow Chair Exercises and Dancing for Seniors](http://www.ehow.com/how_2175872_do-seniors-chair-exercises.html). Get seniors or other low-mobility patrons active with simple chair dances. <http://www.ehow.com/how_2175872_do-seniors-chair-exercises.html>

[Billboard](http://www.billboard.com/charts#/charts) – music charts and information for a wide variety of genres and styles. <http://www.billboard.com/charts#/charts>

[Billboard “Hot 100”](http://www.digitaldreamdoor.com/pages/best_billbord1.html) top songs year-by-year for each decade beginning in 1950. <http://www.digitaldreamdoor.com/pages/best_billbord2.html>

[About.com 20th Century History](http://history1900s.about.com/od/1900s/1900_1909.htm). 20th century issues and events decade by decade – a great way to quickly develop conversation starters based on each decade’s major events and ideas. <http://history1900s.about.com/od/decadebydecade/Decade_By_Decade.htm>

[Lone Star College American Cultural History](http://kclibrary.lonestar.edu/decade00.html). 20th century American cultural history decade by decade, including photographs and a discussion of popular music of the time. <http://kclibrary.lonestar.edu/decade10.html>

[The official website of George and Ira Gershwin](http://www.gershwin.com/): Explore a history of the brothers, bibliography of the Gershwin’s works, and a jukebox of Gershwin music. <http://www.gershwin.com/>

[Appalachian State University – Hayes School of Music](http://music.appstate.edu/about/amssg/resources). Song, Game and Instrumental resources related to Appalachian Folk Music. This site has singing games and music resources appropriate for all ages. <http://music.appstate.edu/about/amssg/resources>

Crafts and Activities:

**Homemade tap shoes by Martha Stewart** - <http://www.marthastewart.com/265191/homemade-tap-shoes>

Clack out a beat with dancing feet: Bottle caps transform everyday footwear into ear-pleasing tap shoes. Use two same-size metal tops about 1 1/2 inches wide. With an awl, punch two holes through the top of each cap; they should be about 3/4 inch apart. Thread string or twine through the holes so both ends come out on the inside of the cap. Attach string to shoes by weaving through shoelaces and tying securely.

Have program attendees use the tap shoes to tap out the rhythm of their favorite song or the beats of a poem / nursery rhyme. This is a great way to encourage music and motion in older adults!



[**Discovery Education’s Puzzlemaker**](http://www.discoveryeducation.com/free-puzzlemaker/?CFID=15483111&CFTOKEN=59766474) **- Free customizable word games and puzzles you can print.**  <http://www.discoveryeducation.com/free-puzzlemaker/?CFID=15483111&CFTOKEN=59766474>

Use Puzzlemaker to create a themed puzzle and distribute it wherever you hold a musical memories program. In five minutes or less you can create a puzzle to reflect a particular decade, musical style or musician. Use the puzzles to encourage patrons to reminisce and increase cognitive activity.

**Make a musical instrument** – from simple inexpensive drums made out of oatmeal cartons and percussion sticks made out of wooden dowels to more complex projects like Theremins and hand-hewn guitars the internet has a wealth of information about creating homemade musical instruments. Simple wooden dowels can be used by patrons to tap out the beat to favorite songs. You can even create a band using only homemade instruments. The following sites are great place to search – you’re sure to find instruction for creating any musical instrument you can think of!

[Instructables](http://www.instructables.com/tag/type-id/category-play/channel-instruments/) – has a category of free instructional videos dedicated to creating fun and usable instruments at <http://www.instructables.com/tag/type-id/category-play/channel-instruments/>

[TLC](http://tlc.howstuffworks.com/family/musical-instruments-for-kids.htm) (The Learning Channel) – has a wonderful page of free musical creations and activities for kids of all ages at <http://tlc.howstuffworks.com/family/musical-instruments-for-kids.htm> Projects include a cardboard guitar, pie pan tambourine, musical chimes, and much more.

[eHow](http://www.ehow.com/videos-on_5019_make-musical-instruments-kids.html) – has a series of free instructional videos *How to Make Musical Instruments for Kids* with a wide range of simple and inexpensive activities that would work well as quick crafts for adults and seniors. Many of the creations feature household items transformed in to music-makers.

<http://www.ehow.com/videos-on_5019_make-musical-instruments-kids.html>

Partnership and Programming Ideas

Use the Bingo games included in this kit to play music bingo. Photocopy the bingo cards and use a portable CD player to play the short song clips on the Bingo CD. Have small music related prizes like kazoos or noise makers for winners.

Use the *I Hear Music* boxed set included in this kit to get patrons talking about the past and reminiscing about sounds from childhood. Pass around the photographs while playing a short sound clip from the included CD. Use the activity guide to present opportunities for discussion and reminiscing.

Find and print song lyrics for some of your favorite oldies and host a sing-along.

Encourage movement in older adults by playing up-tempo songs and having the adults tap out the beat using percussion sticks, tambourines or shakers. Increase movement activity by adding ribbons or crepe-paper streamers individuals can move with the music.

If you are taking the program to a nursing care facility or other location with patrons with low mobility you can develop a chair dancing routine to use with the included music. Big Band and classics 1950’s pop music hits work well for this. You can find many examples of chair dancing on YouTube or read the basic instructions available at <http://www.ehow.com/how_2175872_do-seniors-chair-exercises.html>

Use the music as background for a themed party – you can choose to use decades as themes or even specific music styles. Try using Big bands, Swing, patriotic songs, and early Rock and Roll as party themes. Decorate appropriately and encourage attendees to dress as a favorite artist from the era.

Create a song using poetry. Have each person write a short poem and set the poetry to a familiar tune or children’s rhyme. This can also be done as a group activity by encouraging each person to come up with one line for a poem. If the group is not comfortable with this activity, try playing a song and having each person use two or three descriptive words to share what they are feeling when they hear the song. Group these words on a blackboard or and arrange them in to a poem. Read aloud or sing the resulting poem as you play the original song.

Music and memory are connected. Use the contents of this kit to encourage discussion and reminiscing. Play music selected from the kit’s CDs and encourage patrons to share stories and memories evoked by the songs. The CD of lullabies and nursery rhymes will work especially well for this activity. You could also pass around the kit’s books and encourage patrons to look at book covers and photographs as they remember famous stars and performers from years past. These activities are a great way to involve everyone in a program – after all each patron has unique memories and stories to share. Even if patrons are unable recall a specific memory, they may experience feelings of nostalgia that can be expressed verbally. One patron may hear a song and remember a specific event while another may recall general feelings of nostalgia for the years of high school.

Here are some discussion questions to get you started – each question is open ended to encourage sharing of the people, places, events, and feelings in each individual’s past:

* What lullabies were your favorites? Do you recall singing to your children?
* Did your childhood include musical games played with friends and family? Often these childhood songs and games remain in our memories – do you recall any specific songs, rhymes or activities that were childhood favorites? (example: hop-scotch, patty cake, ring around the rosie, duck-duck-goose)
* Are there particular songs you associate with meaningful events in your life? Birthdays, weddings, graduations, funerals, and religious services all have associated music. Do you have songs that always strike a chord and bring back memories of these experiences or nostalgic feelings for the past?
* What style of music or music genre was popular when you were a teenager? Do you still enjoy listening to this type of music? Have you shared this music with your friends and family?
* Did your school have a music program? Did you participate in an organized choir or band at your school, church or other institution? Did your childhood include music lessons for voice or instrument? Did you enjoy these lessons or find them to be a chore.
* How and where did you learn to dance? Have you ever attended a school dance or a dance organized by a religious group? Do you like to dance?
* What nationalist songs do you know – include songs from the United States as well as other countries? Do these songs inspire feelings of loyalty and pride in you?
* Do you know any protest songs? Do you remember the cause each song represents?
* Did song play a part in your religious tradition? Do you have a favorite religious song or ceremony?
* Did your family traditions include any unique music specific to your culture or the geographic area you grew up in?
* Have you ever attended a vaudeville show, Broadway show or music concert? What do you remember about it? Do you recall any of the performers or musical numbers?
* Have you ever gone to a club to listen to music and/or dance? Do you remember the year, location of the club, or type of music?
* Did your family have a radio, record player or television growing up? Did you have a favorite program you liked to listen to or watch? Do you remember any music formats not common today – for example the Victrola, a music box, and a player piano?
* Does music evoke specific emotions in you? Are marches energizing and soft music relaxing? Does some music make you think of rural areas or nature and other music urban areas?
* Is there any song you have shared with someone special? What song is it? When was the first time you heard this song?

**Partnerships**

Organize a concert at your library or outreach location. Local school or church music groups may be willing to come perform free of charge. You may also have library staff members with musical talents – have them perform or lead a sing-a-long. Bluegrass or traditional Appalachian Folk music would make wonderful performances appropriate for all ages.

[The Kentucky Humanities Council](http://www.kyhumanities.org/) offers several Chautauqua performers as well as other speakers with music themed performances. Visit their website for a list of Chautauqua characters and Speaker’s Bureau members.