Bringing music activities to people living in care home settings; Covid 19 and beyond



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“I had a dream, my dream was to hear my mum’s voice again, even if it’s just three words. … As they neared the end of the song, that’s when it happened. A way-down-deep vocal noise… I can’t remember the last time I heard my mum’s voice. Chords that were broken will vibrate once more.”

Daughter of Nursing Home resident



Contents

Section One:
music suggestions to embed in the care home setting

Section Two:
music suggestions for activity coordinators, staff members or family

Section Three:
resources to support music activities.

This booklet provides guidance to support the use of music and music-based activities in care home settings to improve the health, wellbeing and quality of life of residents.

It is aimed at care staff, activity coordinators and family members.

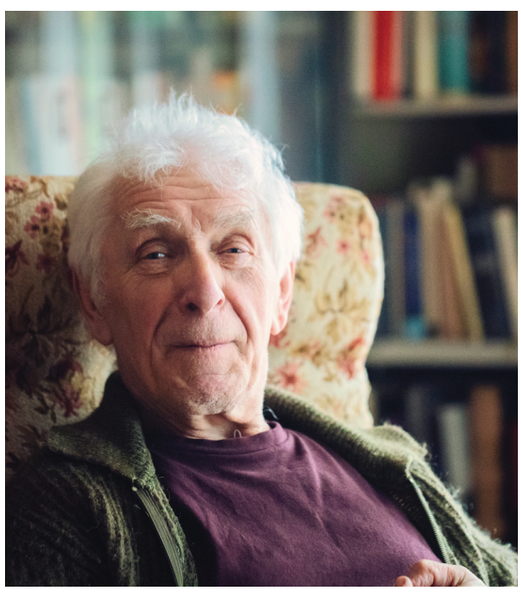
Introduction

Music is a powerful tool for expression. It can touch our emotions and allows a freedom of communication which needs no words.

Music helps those living with dementia by unlocking memories, giving a means to express emotions and feelings when communication is difficult.

During the Covid-19 crisis, music may help residents missing face to face contact with loved ones by promoting self expression, reducing feelings of isolation and supporting their emotional and psychological needs.

Music can be incorporated into all aspects of daily life within the care home setting with minimal expense or time commitment.



Section 1

Embedding music in the care home setting

Information for all staff, carers and families

What is the "soundscape" or background sounds in the care home setting?

- Can any changes be made that might improve the sound experience of the home for everyone?
- Appropriately selected background music at the right time and volume can create a positive atmosphere.
- Music preference is completely individual, and not everyone will respond positively to the same thing. This must be taken into account when choosing music in the care home.
- When selecting music for an individual ask or find out if they ever played and instrument or sang in a choir, did they attend concert, or do they have a preferred radio station.



How can carers embed music into daily routines?

Use personalised songs to:

- Support routines or indicate key moments e.g. mealtimes.
- Provide comfort before tasks the person finds challenging, e.g. washing and dressing.
- Motivate or stimulate before family visits or social activities.
- Relax or destimulate at the end of the day.



“It was amazing to watch residents with very complex abilities respond to the music. Some who hadn’t been able to verbalise for years due to their dementia actually hummed and uttered sounds.”

Nursing Home Manager





Section 2

Music-based activities

Information for Activity Coordinators and others involved in planning and implementing activities

Listening to music (individual activity)

- Set up personal music collections (e.g. YouTube, Spotify, Amazon Music on Alexa).

- The following links provide information on how to create personalised playlists:

- Music for Dementia – Create a playlist
- Playlist for Life
- 'Music Mirrors'

(You will find the links to these websites on page 10.)

Listening to music

- Discuss favourites, how we know them, why they are meaningful.
- Consider an in-house ‘radio station’ with personalised music, song requests and messages sent in by friends and family.
- The ‘Music 4 Dementia 2020’ station has been specifically designed for older people and people with dementia. It has themed programmes tailored to the time of day, no adverts and minimal talking.



Memory / reminiscence activities

- Create a ‘life review in music’ by identifying and sharing the music that has accompanied key moments in a person’s life. This can be a powerful way to connect with a person’s life experiences.
- BBC Music Memories is a valuable resource of music categorised by themes or decades with accompanying activity sheets (link below).

Physical activity and movement

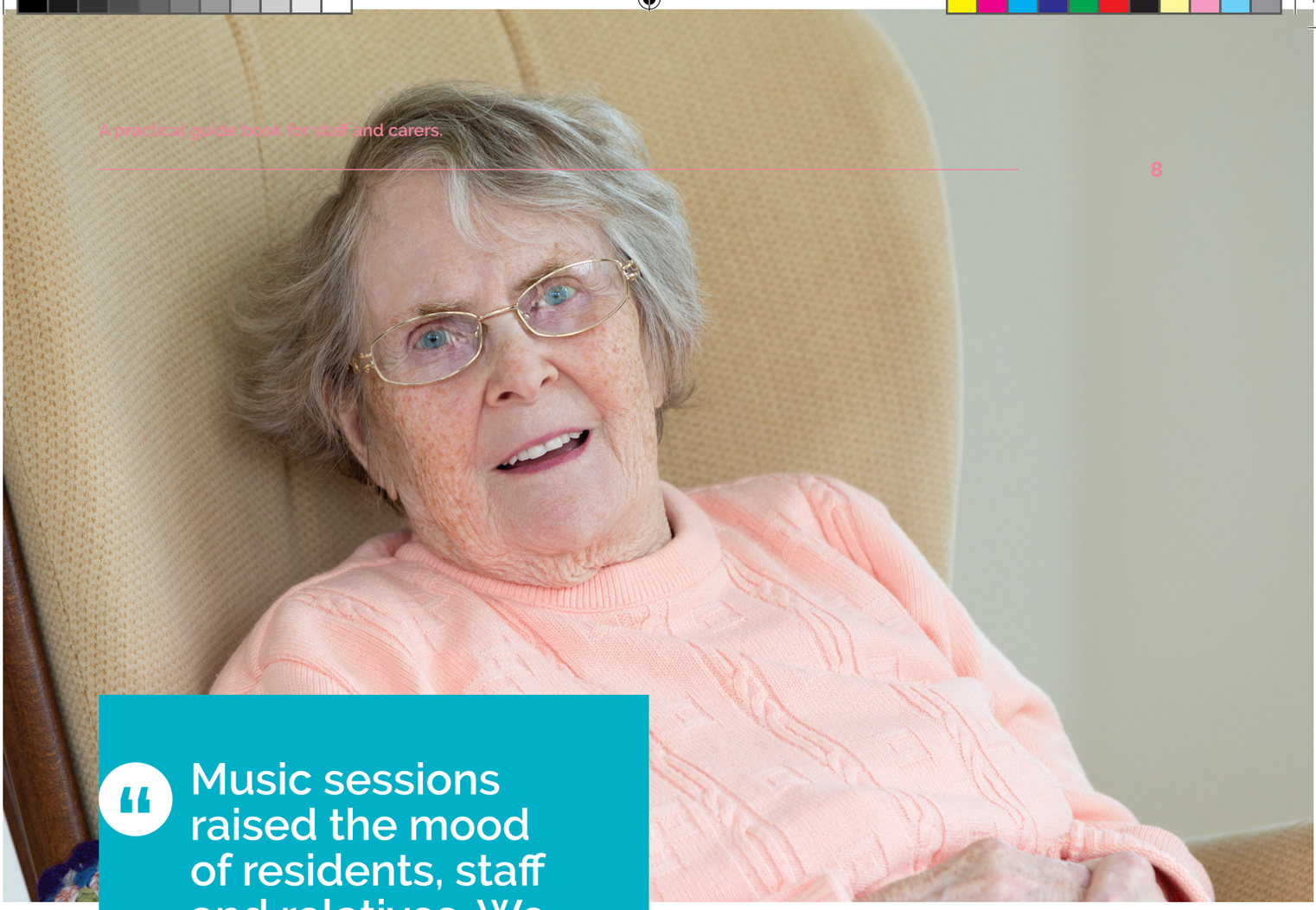
- ‘Music and movement’ sessions can be a motivating and engaging way to increase physical activity.
- Dance can promote mobility, flexibility and strength



Music activities for social connection and cognitive stimulation

- Themed music-based quizzes
- ‘Name that tune’ – ask people to name the song, artist, or share a related memory.
- Musical bingo - snippets of songs are played and players mark them off their card when they hear them (cards can be downloaded online).
- Start with pictures of famous singers, talk about who they are, what you know about them, and then listen to them together.





> “Music sessions raised the mood of residents, staff and relatives. We all watched with amazement the power of music and the impact it had on our residents.”
>
> Nursing Home Manager



Using music-based activities to connect with families

Sharing music can help to maintain meaningful connections with family and friends outside of the care home setting. Families can become actively involved in contributing to life reviews or creating playlists - children especially can enjoy becoming ‘music detectives’ and finding music their family member enjoys.

Section 3

Resources to support music activities

1. **Arts in Care Homes** - https://artsincarehomes.org.uk/ - with guides, tips for music activities in care homes

2. **Music for Dementia**

- A Musical Guide for people with dementia and their carers during Covid-19 - https://musicfordementia.org.uk/info/musical-guide.pdf https://www.musicmirrors.co.uk/

- 'Music for Dementia radio' - www.m4dradio.com

3. **BBC Music Memories** - https://musicmemories.bbcrewind.co.uk/ is a valuable resource of music categorised by themes or divided into decades with accompanying activity sheets.

4. **Playlist for Life** – https://www.playlistforlife.org.uk/

- Spotify playlists - https://open.spotify.com/user/playlistdementia

- How to connect through music whilst social distancing https://www.playlistforlife.org.uk/how-to-connect-through-music-whilst-social-distancing/

5. **Live Music Now at home** - https://www.livemusicnow.org.uk/lmnathomevideos Video library for care homes and the general public - https://www.livemusicnow.org.uk/lmnathomecare





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