



Wellness Through Music - Expressive Arts Programs

Intended Audience

For all members including people living with cancer, family members and significant caregivers.

Program Description

Wellspring Calgary offers a variety of music programs including song-writing, music therapy, instrumental workshops in drumming and ukulele, as well as in-house concert events. Members embrace the sense of community that music brings with a weekly music jam, bringing their own music and instruments. In the words of poet and novelist Victor Hugo, "Music expresses that which cannot be put into words and that which cannot remain silent."

Benefits and Impact

According to numerous studies, music for pleasure or for therapy produces immeasurable benefits and creates an overall sense of well-being. In cancer-related studies, there is evidence that music can help reduce pain, increase concentration, boost mood, improve physical movement, reduce stress and relieve chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting. Other studies show that playing an instrument or engaging in musical activities lowers heart rate, breathing rate and blood pressure. Overall, medical experts agree that music can reduce some symptoms of illness and vastly enrich a patient's quality of life.

What to Expect at a Session

Wellspring Calgary's music programs are for members of every skill level and interest. Upon signing up, participants will be expertly guided by facilitators who are generously talented and focused on the healthful benefits of music in life and in health. Some programs involve listening and discussing, others involve composing and playing. The point of all music programs is to find pleasure and solace and to connect to self and others through notes, rhythms and words.

Participant Comments

"Music eases the soul, raises spirits and builds community."

"I enjoy watching people smiling and not worrying about anything or anyone."

"Music stimulates healing."

What the Research Says:

Research shows that music therapy (MT) may lower anxiety, pain, mood-related disorders, and physiological symptoms. In a study involving 126 palliative cancer patients, patients self-reported that their pain decreased from 2.7 to 2.1 on a 5-point pain scale after completing a single session of MT. Scientists also analyzed 6 separate studies on MT and found that anxiety levels were significantly decreased in patients who underwent a weekly 20-40 minute MT session compared to those who did not. Furthermore, mood-related disorders such as anger, fatigue, and confusion were found to decrease. In a 2011 study, scientists found that MT had a small effect on lowering blood pressure, heart rate, and respiratory rate in cancer patients (Archie P., Bruera E., Cohen L. 2013. Music-based interventions in palliative cancer care: a review of quantitative studies and neurobiological literature. Support Care Cancer. 21 (9):2609-2624).

Program Frequency:

2 hours per week
1-3 weeks per program
1-3 programs per session
Winter, spring/summer, fall

Optimum class size:

Programs: 16 /
House Music Concerts: 30+

Related Programs:

Drumming
House Music Concerts
Music is my Therapy
Music Jam Sessions
Song-Writing
Ukulele