

Case Report

The Development of a Music Therapy Protocol: A Music 4 Life® Case Report of a Veteran with PTSDRebecca Wellman¹, Judith Pinkerton²¹Wellman Therapy Services, Chicago, Illinois, USA²Music 4 Life®, Las Vegas, Nevada, USA**Abstract**

A music therapist-directed protocol designed to assist in resolving unsettled moods and bringing emotional balance is explicated through a case report of a 36 year old Army veteran. Upon completing a protocol, increased motivation, decreased stress, and a reported sense of feeling more “complete” following four years of medical disability and significant social phobias was noted. Posttests completed at marked intervals during the 10 week treatment period showed significant shifts in emotional states with reduced anxiety and depression. Physician directed cessation of anti-anxiety, depression, and pain medications subsequently led to increased reengagement with previously enjoyed activities and a reported enhanced quality of life.

Keywords: PTSD, adults, veterans, depression, anxiety, social phobiasmultilingual abstract | mmd.iammonline.com**Introduction**

American veterans returning to public life often face difficulty as a result of symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Along with Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI), PTSD is one of the most prevalent diagnoses being treated at Veterans Health Administration offices across the country [1]. The US Department of Veterans Affairs [2] and the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders V [3] criteria for a diagnosis of PTSD includes directly experiencing traumatic events, witnessing traumatic events occurring to others, learning about a traumatic event which happened to a close friend or family member, or continued or “extreme exposure” to the intimate details of traumatic events such as those who are first responders. In addition, those with PTSD may experience flashbacks, avoidance of people or places related to the trauma, negative beliefs about oneself, reduced interest in previously enjoyable activities, feelings of irritation, and difficulty concentrating or sleeping for a duration of a month or longer. Those experiencing PTSD are at a higher risk for suicidal ideation and suicide attempts. They also incur higher instances of physical, social, and occupational disability.

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Wellman Therapy Services, Chicago, Illinois, USA; Music 4 Life®, Las Vegas, Nevada, USA E-mail: wellmantherapy@gmail.com | COI statement: The authors declared that no financial support was given for the writing of this article. The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

Individuals with PTSD may have difficulty in social situations, educational settings, their interpersonal relationships, their workplace, and with their physical health [3].

According to the American Music Therapy Association [4] music therapy has been shown as a treatment option for returning soldiers since 1945 when the US War Department included music therapy in Technical Bulletin 187, however there are documents indicating its use during World War I as well. This endorsement continued with research by both the U.S. Army and the Office of the Surgeon General. Music therapy techniques have been utilized in patients with PTSD to provide a safe environment where clients can experience and express feelings initially, without needing to talk. Music therapy has demonstrated efficacy with those impacted by war or conflicts [5-6] as well as with persons who have experienced complex traumas [7-17].

The use of music to elicit or entrain emotional responses has also been shown as a possible means of treatment [18]. Research shows that music listening has been found to alter interleukin-1 and cortisol levels in participants [19], reduce perceived stress [20], increase levels of relaxation and concentration [21,22], undo or cancel feelings of anxiety [23,24], evoke specific desired emotions [25-28] and reduce pain [29-31], or assist in recollection of previous information (memory) or emotional states [32,33]. By utilizing the isoprinciple [34] of matching music to the client’s presented mood and modulating affect response through applying the entrainment mechanisms [35] to their desired emotional state, as well as accounting for client preference, music therapists can aid in reducing the emotional distress presented by veterans.

Music preferences have an impact on client responses. By incorporating the client’s personal music preferences into treatment, therapists can increase relaxation and reduce

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