

Play The Drums To Beat The Doldrums!

Lavanya Krishnakumar (Trustee) and Aneka Paul (Trustee)

GOLDEN BUTTERFLIES CHILDREN'S PALLIATIVE CARE FOUNDATION

26, Unnamalai Ammal Street, North Usman Road, T. Nagar, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India 600017

INTRODUCTION: What is Music Therapy? - Music Therapy is an interpersonal process in which the therapist uses music to soothe, heal, and rejuvenate the body, mind, and spirit of the client.

LITERATURE REVIEW: Published studies of the therapeutic use of music to treat pain in India since 2010:

- Universal feature of all musical interventions – passive consumption of music.
- Excluded any survey of musical tastes/preferences of the patient.
- Merely listening; no other form of active participation.

POSITIVE FINDINGS: Music was a contributing factor in the mitigation of pain.

AIM OF GOLDEN BUTTERFLIES BANDWAGON (GBB): To add a Musical Therapy session to the repertoire of Art and Recreational Therapy offered by Golden Butterflies to children receiving treatment/ in palliative care, in Government hospitals of Chennai, South India.

SUCCESSFUL DISTRACTION THERAPIES ALREADY PRACTISED IN GBB:



Storytelling



Medi-clowning



Games



Dance

To restore some agency to the child.

Adding movement, energy, and voice to sessions.

WHY?

To encourage autonomy in 'wellness'.

To include family and caregivers in the activity.

METHODS:

- Rhythm session was conducted outside the Outpatient Ward (OP) in a Government Hospital.
- The tools: simple and inexpensive musical instruments using low-cost material.
- The exercises: mirroring, call-and-response, passing the sound, playing with the volume, and the 'universally enjoyed' rumble.
- Child-patients were offered their choice of instruments, could even swap in between.
- Responses recorded via video interviews, ballot boxes with emoticons, ringing the bell, and the 'high 5' sign.



Handmade Instrument



Voting using Ballot Box

RESULTS:

- Enthusiastic and active participation of child-patients and their caregivers.
- Safe and enjoyable activity.
- Easily facilitated in a busy hospital (OP) environment.
- Cost-effective intervention.
- Easily replicable.



Ballot Box & Bell

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Making inexpensive musical instruments available in procedure rooms for child-patients to choose & play.
- Training nurses in methods of distraction therapy using music - singing lullabies, rhymes, etc.
- Equipping procedure rooms with soothing piped music from a curated playlist according to child-patient's choice.

CONCLUSION: Music Therapy ranks high as a low-cost, non-invasive, highly effective intervention, affording an enriching engagement with the group of child-patients and caregivers, which promotes wellness and joy over mere 'distraction from pain'.

Supported by St Jude Global Palliative Care Programme to attend the APHC 2023 in October 2023 at Incheon, Republic of Korea

Disclaimer: Photographs are used with the assent of the child and consent of his/her parent/guardian