

## MARY POTTER HOSPICE MUSIC THERAPY AUDIT FOR WINTER 2009

When Mary Potter Hospice began hiring music therapist Raeline Savage for 4 hours per week, it sought to evaluate the effectiveness of this potentially healing modality. Thus, a simple audit tool was designed to measure pain, general well-being, and relaxation (on scales of 1–10) both before and after the music therapy. Patients receiving the therapy were also asked two additional questions regarding their appreciation for this therapy. Nursing staff were responsible for collecting these data. Data were collected between May and July of 2009. The sample is one of convenience.

### Findings:

Complete data were available for 26 patients.

- Pain diminished significantly from before music therapy to after therapy (mean of 3.08 to 2.23;  $t=2.8$ ;  $df=25$ ;  $p=.01$ ).
- General sense of well-being significantly increased from before to after therapy (mean of 4.0 to 2.73;  $t=3.0$ ;  $df=35$ ;  $p=.006$ ).
- Relaxation likewise improved significantly (mean of 3.64 to 2.36;  $t=2.7$ ;  $df=24$ ;  $p=.013$ ).
- When asked, "How much did the music therapy help you?" (1=not at all, 4=a good deal), responses averaged 3.5 (range 1–4; Std Dev=.85). This indicates most responses indicated it helped a good deal. Indeed, 2/3rds of the patients marked 4 as their answer.
- When asked if they would "recommend music therapy to someone like yourself?", all but 2 of 27 respondents reported yes.
- The brief anecdotal comments supplied by some participants were positive. A couple particular choice comments include: "Would you please debit my account so as [to give] a contribution to the musician?" and "Enjoyed it very much, good to occupy the mind."
- The most prevalent reasons for referring a patient to the music therapist were 1) anxiety, 2) pain, and 3) social isolation.

### Implications and Recommendations:

The data that we have strongly supports the efficacy of our music therapist. Yet caution must be added: This is a sample of convenience. It is also a small sample. Future research endeavours must establish better processes for collecting data.

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