

# Job description music therapist

## 1 Job title

Music therapist

## 2 Definition

Music therapy is the targeted use of musical activities aimed at developing and restoring the physical, psychic and emotional balance of the human being.

It acts on the quality of life by mobilising the resources and potential of the subject with the objective of prevention, rehabilitation and support for healing.

Music is a non-verbal medium. It arouses and revives emotions in the person and can stimulate their cognitive, social and creative abilities, allowing them to better confront and manage the conflicts and challenges of their life.

Thanks to the different musical parameters, music therapy, active and/or receptive, produces intrapsychic and relational processes. In the therapeutic relationship a trained music therapist treats these processes verbally or non-verbally, in a group or in an individual setting, in accordance with the therapeutic indication.

Music therapy is a form of art mediation therapy. According to the academic training and the orientation of the music therapist, their methods are based on psychodynamic, behavioural, systemic, holistic-humanistic and integrative approaches.

## 3 Missions

### 3.1 Main Missions

- Respond and adapt to a prescription or therapeutic indication from a doctor, psychologist, psychotherapist, a multidisciplinary team, an institution or even at the request of the patient themselves or at the request of their family.
- Create the context for a process of evolution, change, development, by establishing a clear and traceable plan of action.
- Identify the nature of difficulties of psychic and/or physical nature by means of a personalised assessment. Understand the symptomatic expression, the needs and the abilities of the treated person(s).
- Mobilize thought processes and develop creative potential.
- Work on the follow-up in partnership with the various actors of the subjects' network (medical-social-educational) in strict respect of the rules of professional confidentiality.
- Evaluate and adapt the support of the person in the short, medium and long term.

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## 3.2 Additional Missions

For the supported person (s) the music therapist must:

- Preserve the acquired skills and the autonomy of the person where possible.
- Take their familial, social, cultural and institutional background into account.
- Analyse and evaluate the therapeutic relationship.

## 4 Activities

### 4.1 Main Activities

- Manage a person or a therapy group during a session.
- To successfully manage a session, the music therapist uses all available essential elements of music (rhythm, sound, movement, harmonies, etc...) and the music itself in relation to the person, their history, their abilities and their communication skills (verbal and non-verbal), and their psychic and intellectual mobility.

Two possible approaches:

- The so-called « active » music therapy which consists of working with different instruments or sound mediators. Centred on physical, sound-related and musical expression of the subject in relation to the music therapist, it promotes the emergence of abilities, creativity and especially self-expression. The improvisation sequences can be recorded and played back during a later session.
- The « receptive » music therapy which relies on coordinated listening sessions following a strict protocol.

The music therapist is attentive to the verbal and non-verbal clues of the supported person.

Collaborating with the professionals that are in regular contact with the supported person:

- Participation in reviews: the music therapist is often part of a team to which they relay relevant information gathered during the sessions. This also allows them to re-evaluate their objectives according to the evolution of the person.
- Co-therapy: the music therapist can collaborate with other professionals (psychologist, psychiatrist, social workers, therapists using other non-verbal mediums) when taking care of a person.
- Consultations with the subject before and after sessions including a psycho-musical appraisal.

### 4.2 Specific activities

- Taking part in seminars, symposiums, research activities and lectures on music therapy
- Commitment to ongoing training and to consenting to professional supervision
- Educational supervision of students and of trainee music therapists.

### 4.3 Intervention areas

The different intervention areas of music therapy are:

- The health environment, hospitals, maternity wards, paediatrics, general psychiatry, child psychiatry, geriatric psychiatry, units for pain management, oncology, surgery, palliative care, neurology, etc.
- The social environment (reception centres, etc.)
- The prison environment
- The educational environment
- The socio-cultural environment
- The humanitarian environment

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#### **4.4 Type of subjects**

Music therapy is aimed at:

- People suffering from psychosis or other psychological and psychiatric disorders.
- Persons with disabilities, whether mental, mobile, sensory or multiple disabilities.
- People with neurological disorders.
- People with degenerative or chronic diseases.
- To people nearing the end of life.
- To (future) parents and to babies (supported perinatal parenthood).
- Children, teenagers and adults suffering from affective, development, behavioural, personality disorders or substance dependence (illegal substances, alcohol, etc.).
- People with psycho-social difficulties.
- Those who have suffered abused.
- People suffering from cross-cultural difficulties.
- Inmates suffering from isolation and communication disorders.
- Elderly people with decreasing independence.
- People suffering from anxiety or pain at time of surgical procedures.

#### **5 Training and experience**

The training course is aimed at professionals, students, anyone in the artistic, health, education and social fields.

The career path of a music therapist can hardly be compared to those of other vocational training. Currently, in the European Union, there are Bachelor, Master and PHD courses in music therapy. Regarding admission criteria, some training centres or universities require prior studies in musical sciences, pedagogy or psychology. Other degrees constitute Bachelor-Master cycles of five years immediately following the end of secondary school. Several years of musical experiences linked to various instruments – often linked to musical lessons from infancy – form an indispensable prerequisite.

## 6 Skills music therapist

| KNOW HOW   | KNOWLEDGE  |
|--|--|
| <b>RECEPTION OF PUBLIC</b>   |  |
| Perform an interview<br>Consult case files<br>Analysis and implementation in accordance with a therapeutic indication or requirement<br>Assess the psychopathological, physiological, psychosocial, cultural and educational difficulties of a person  | Interview techniques<br>General knowledge in psychopathology, neurophysiology, educational psychology<br>Knowledge of the field of verbal and non-verbal communication or communication techniques   |
| <b>LEADING A SESSION</b>   |  |
| Animate individual or group sessions<br>Possess the necessary musical skills that allow you to improvise on several instruments, harmonize a melody, note a rhythmic and melodic formula, analyse a piece of music or a musical sequence<br>Make use of the different building blocks of music<br>Implement the different sound mediators<br>Adapting to different situations and demonstrate creativity<br>Be able to carry out a diagnosis | Instrumental and vocal practice<br>General knowledge of different musical repertoires (intergenerational and cultural, early childhood, etc.)<br>Musical expression techniques<br>Music theory<br>Knowledge of improvisation models in music therapy<br>Relational techniques<br>Analysis and observation methods<br>Counselling techniques<br>General knowledge in psychopathology etc. |
| <b>INTERVIEWS AND VERBALISATION</b>  |  |
| Set up and conduct interviews and/or verbalizations with individuals or in group settings<br>Identify elements of verbal and non-verbal communication  | Interview and communication techniques   |
| <b>COLLABORATION WITH MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAMS</b>  |  |
| Mobilize and coordinate the various actors and social, medical, psychological, educational networks, etc.<br>Evaluate practices regularly<br>Be able to record the relevant information, orally and in writing, relating to supported people   | Knowledge of the functioning of social structures and social, medical, psychological, educational networks, etc.<br>Knowledge of the roles of the different actors involved<br>"Concise writing skills"  |
| <b>RELATIONAL SKILLS</b>   |  |
| Collaborating<br>Listening<br>Observing<br>Anticipating<br>Adapting  | Empathy<br>Attentive listening<br>Relational techniques<br>Support techniques  |
| <b>ASSOCIATED SKILLS</b>   |  |
| Mobilising the physical capacities of people with reduced mobility<br>Mobilizing the psychological capacities of the supported people  | Physiological, basic psychopathological knowledge<br>Handling techniques   |

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