

TIPS for Hiring a Great Music Therapist

Today, the term Music Therapy has hit pop culture. Television shows speak of it. I hear it mentioned during music award shows, in national bestselling books. Online articles and blogs about music therapy are popping up everywhere. The News seems to regularly feature someone being helped by music therapy.

Clarification of how Music Therapy works as a profession is important to dispel a few misconceptions. Music Therapist's are talented musically and can help you achieve your goals with the use of music. A music therapist's role is to ensure that music is used under the highest of ethical standards and with the largest body of knowledge. Music, a powerful resource, can do great things but it can also cause harm by bringing up lost or undesired memories. It can strike tones that hurt your ears, or it can take individuals into a place of agitation.

The music therapist monitors each individual response carefully. These responses in combination with the therapist's program facilitation direct the client to reach their desired goals and objectives over a set period of time.

When selecting a music therapist look for someone who:

a) is certified

Countries throughout the world have national certification programs for music therapists who have graduated with the prescribed educational requirements including supervised clinical work.

b) participates in on-going education

A degree, and even a license, may not guarantee the effectiveness of a music therapist. It is important you ensure that they go beyond their certification. The therapist you consider should demonstrate their participation in ongoing education. This indicates that the therapist has initiative and a passion for their profession. It will also help you identify where their interests lie. Is their continuing education related to the goals you have for yourself?

c) has good rapport with you

Even the most perfect, experienced therapist on paper may not be the right fit for you unless you can identify with them and their personality. Your relationship with the therapist is essential to the process, so it is important to find someone with whom you feel connected and with whom you feel safe. The areas you work on will depend on whether you are hoping to be: challenged,

validated, inspired, or transformed. A good therapist is going to take time to get to know you and what your goals are before any contract is signed.

Questions to help guide you to your desired music therapist include but are not limited to:

a) What expertise do you have in the area I am hoping to develop, change, or improve?

Although the therapist doesn't necessarily need previous experience in helping with your exact problem, the therapist should be at least familiar with your type of situation and be prepared to tell you how they've helped others in similar circumstances.

b) What do they think is usually helpful for the problem you have described?

This question will give you some idea as to the process the therapist will use and what has proven effective in the past. Although you may not know exactly what they mean until you go through the process yourself, it will give you a sense of the therapist and whether their values align with yours.

c) What is their fee?

In most cases you will be paying for a music therapist out of your agency budget or individual pocket. Consider the outcomes that are being promised and decide if you are able to comfortably afford the therapist's fee. During the first meeting, you and the therapist will determine the approximate length of therapy necessary to help with your particular issues and goals. This should help determine a "ballpark" figure for the total cost of therapy.

d) What would the recommended appointment schedule look like?

Ensure that the therapist can accommodate your time needs and is comfortable working with you on that basis. After your first or second session speak with your therapist about the frequency of the sessions needed for you to reach your goals in the most efficient way.