

Boquete Health & Hospice



The Magic of Music
Healing the Heart, Body & Soul

Music's Ability to Support Health & Wellness

By Art Blevins

"We may be sitting on one of the most widely available and cost-effective therapeutic modalities that ever existed. Systematically, this could be like taking a pill. Listening to music seems to be able to change brain functioning to the same extent as medication, in many circumstances."

[1. Stanford News, "Feeling the Beat: Symposium explores the therapeutic effects of rhythmic music" published by Stanford University]

Scientific studies have shown music's impact on depression, anxiety, pain, and its power to improve social skills in individuals with autism [2. American Psychological Association, "Music as Medicine"]. The Mayo Clinic also points out that music memory is one of the brain functions most resistant to dementia. Music is a stronghold against Alzheimer's, as memories of music don't get lost to the disease [3. Mayo Clinic, "Can music help someone with Alzheimer's?"]. Even the medical team at Pfizer Pharmaceuticals has published reports stating that music improves mood, reduces stress and anxiety, improves memory, improves exercise, eases pain, provides comfort, and improves cognition [4. Pfizer, "Health Benefits of Music"]. In recognition of this capacity of music, more hospitals around the world are using music therapy before surgery, based on research from the University of Pennsylvania which reveals that music is as powerful as a pharmaceutical sedative in reducing patients' anxiety. [5.

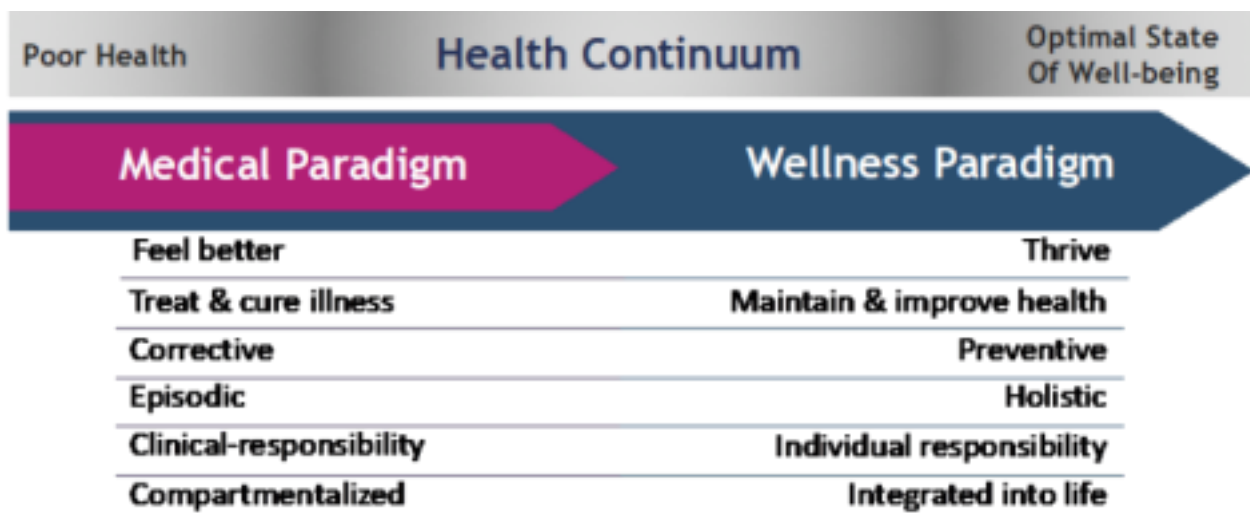
Penn Medicine News, “Music Can Be a Viable Alternative to Medications in Reducing Anxiety Before Anesthesia Procedures”]

The Magic that happens with Music is not only when listening but also in participating by moving to the music or participating in creating the vibrations yourself. As an example, one of every three senior citizens over the age of 65 suffers at least one fall during the course of a year, but music can help! A 2011 study worked with a group of at-risk senior citizens to walk and perform various movements in time to music, and the group experienced 54% fewer falls than the control group. Similar programs of movement to music appear to improve the mobility of patients with Parkinson's disease. [6. Harvard Medical School, “Music and Health”]

This study on music, senior citizens, and falls begins to hint at not only the medical benefits of music but also the ‘wellness’ benefits of music. What exactly do we mean by ‘wellness’? Here’s how Pfizer defines wellness:

“Wellness is the act of practicing healthy habits on a daily basis to attain better physical and mental health outcomes so that instead of just surviving, you’re thriving.” [7. Pfizer, “What Is Wellness?”]

To further expand on the concept of wellness, the following graphic compares the medical paradigm with the wellness paradigm. [8. Global Wellness Institute, “What Is Wellness?”]



What is the connection between wellness and music? Music is emerging as one of the hottest trends in wellness, and wellness concepts are shaking up the massive music industry. “Wellness music” is being born, and the trend takes so many forms. Funding for medical studies on music’s impact on the brain is really heating up, with researchers using biofeedback, AI (Artificial Intelligence), and machine learning to identify how music’s structural properties (such as beat, key, chord progression, and timbre) specifically impact biometrics like heart rate, brain waves and sleep patterns—so they can develop music as precision-medicine for everything from pain to PTSD. “Wellness” is becoming a new mode of listening— beyond the artist or genre. From the music industry pivoting to “wellness” music to new technologies that capture our biometric data to create personalized, healing soundscapes—music is undergoing a sudden wellness transformation. [9. Global Wellness Summit, “Wellness Music”]

One of the most provocative developments: the rise of “generative,” AI-powered music apps and technology platforms that pull your biological, psychological, and situational data to create an utterly unique, custom-made-for-you, always-changing soundscape—to improve your mental and physical health any time you want to tune in. New technologies and apps are radically reimagining how music can become a deeply personalized precision medicine. [10. Global Wellness Summit, “Wellness Music”]

The Magic of Music program at Boquete Health & Hospice is ramping up to focus not only on the medical paradigm of music helping patients with degenerative brain diseases but also on music wellness efforts. Initially, we plan to engage in music wellness education, promotional efforts, and if interest builds we hope to offer several programs in the future that include not only passive listening guidance for individuals but also opportunities for wellness through active participation.

Our Mission Statement for the Magic of Music program is:

- *support people in their health and wellness needs by providing Music information, equipment and, volunteer services*
- *inform and promote health and wellness aided by Music*

The Magic of Music Team members:

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