

Music Therapy in School Settings

Mary Adamek, Ph.D.

Music education and music therapy are distinct and separate professions, although there are many opportunities for collaboration between the two. According to the American Music Therapy Association, “Music Therapy is the clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish individualized goals within a therapeutic relationship by a credentialed professional who has completed an approved music therapy program.”

Music therapy interventions can be designed to:

- Promote Wellness
- Manage Stress
- Alleviate Pain
- Express Feelings
- Enhance Memory
- Improve Communication
- Promote Physical Rehabilitation

“Research in music therapy supports its effectiveness in a wide variety of healthcare and educational settings.” (American Music Therapy Association website, www.musictherapy.org)

As music therapy is the use of music to achieve non-music goals, music therapy can be utilized to address students’ development in social, communication, behavioral, emotional, physical and cognitive skills. In school settings, music therapy can be offered as a district-wide or program-wide service or as a related service. As a district or program-wide service, music therapy is provided for students with disabilities to enhance their educational services either in inclusive settings or in more restrictive classroom settings.

Music therapy as a related service can be provided for students who demonstrate, through an eligibility assessment, that music therapy is necessary for the student to benefit from special education and make progress on educational goals.

Music therapy sessions in schools can vary in structure from individual sessions, small group sessions, and services provided in an inclusive classroom. Music therapy services are provided by Board-Certified Music Therapists (MT-BC).

To find out information about the profession of music therapy please visit the American Music Therapy Association website at www.musictherapy.org

To locate a board certified music therapist, please visit the website for the Certification Board for Music Therapists at www.cbmt.org.



Mary Adamek, Ph.D., MT-BC is the Director of the Undergraduate Music Therapy Program at The University of Iowa. Dr. Adamek is co-author of the textbook, *Music in Special Education*, published by the American Music Therapy Association (AMTA), and she has contributed chapters to several music therapy and music education textbooks. She is past president of AMTA and maintains an active leadership role in state, regional and national music therapy organizations.

Dr. Adamek has extensive professional experience as a music therapist and music educator. She is involved in interdisciplinary research at The University of Iowa Children's Hospital to help adolescents use music therapy to decrease pain and anxiety after spinal fusion surgery, supported in part by a Clinician/Researcher grant from AMTA. She is a recipient of the 2015 American Music Therapy Association Lifetime Achievement Award, as well as numerous other awards