metric music therapy

Neurologic Music Therapy services for Southern California

Frequently Asked Questions: Parkinson's disease

What is Neurologic Music Therapy (NMT) and how is it different from conventional music therapy?
NMT is defined as the therapeutic application of music to cognitive, sensory, and motor dysfunctions due to neurologic disease of the human nervous system.
NMT is based on a neuroscience model of music perception and production and the influence of music on non-musical brain and behavior functions.
NMT utilizes a research-based system of Standardized Clinical Techniques for movement, speech & language, and cognitive training.

(Thaut, 2005)

This scientifically supported use of Standardized Clinical Techniques is unique to NMT as well as the advanced neuroscience and research training required in order to obtain the credentials NMT.

How can NMT be of benefit for Parkinson's disease?
NMT benefits the needs of Parkinson's disease in addressing movement, cognitive, and speech needs. The most replicated and researched aspect of Parkinson's disease and NMT is the use of rhythm for gait rehabilitation. Common ambulation needs included lengthening stride length, improving posture, and improving transitional movement (i.e. changing direction, stopping/starting, entering rooms). For cognitive needs, NMT can address attention and memory needs as well as executive skills, such as decision-making & problem solving. NMT is also extremely beneficial for speech needs in regard to vocal production & volume and oral-motor coordination.

How often should I expect to receive NMT treatment?
Rhythm is processed in the brain sub cortically, meaning we don't have to think about it in order for our brains to perceive rhythmic information. Additionally, rhythm is an extremely efficient primer for our motor systems. What we call rhythmic entrainment (the integration of movement to a patterned, rhythmic auditory stimulus), occurs in all of us due to its biological foundations. Have you ever noticed your foot tapping to the beat of a song without you even aware? This is what is understood as rhythmic entrainment. The beauty of entrainment is that it happens immediately. For Parkinson's disease, the research demonstrates that rhythm training for ambulation should occur weekly, however if no treatment is received for two weeks, a decrease in movement will occur due to the degenerative effect of Parkinson's disease. Speech and cognitive needs, like movement needs should ideally be addressed by NMT on a weekly basis.

Is NMT treatment covered by insurance and/or Medicare?
While NMT is a newer field, there have been great strides in private insurance re-imbursement. Metric Music Therapy is able to provide clients with research information and invoices appropriate for private insurance re-imbursement in order for clients to independently seek out reimbursement. Upfront payment is required for all services.
Medicare does not accept NMT services at this time.
Please check with Metric Music Therapy for the most up-to-date information on reimbursement.

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