**What is music therapy?**

Music therapy uses music and music intervention to help patients and their families cope with illness and hospitalization. Music therapy addresses patients' physical, emotional, cognitive and social needs. It can have a significant positive impact on the overall health and well-being of individuals dealing with a variety of conditions. Music therapy can enhance the quality of life for patients and caregivers as well as give families an opportunity to share time together in a positive, creative way.

A music therapist is a unique blend of musician and therapist with specialized training in the use of music intervention to improve psychological, physiological and emotional well-being. Music therapists undergo extensive training at accredited universities to earn degrees that allow them to obtain national board certification.

Music therapy addresses both the psychological and physical challenges associated with living with and treating cancer. Research shows that when used with conventional treatment, music therapy can help reduce pain and relieve chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting. It also may relieve stress and provide an overall sense of well-being.

Music therapy cannot cure cancer, but medical experts believe it can reduce some symptoms, aid in healing, improve movement and enhance quality of life.

**What happens during music therapy?**

- Improvisation
- Singing
- Playing instruments
- Writing songs
- Discussing songs
- Listening to music
- Moving to music

A music therapist is available to work with patients and families during a hospital stay. Sessions are generally provided at the patient's bedside. A music therapist will assess the patient's needs and comfort level with a variety of interventions available to achieve specific goals. The schedule and availability of the music therapist varies by facility.

Music therapy also is available on an outpatient basis through Norton Cancer Institute. A music therapist establishes a relationship with the patient or individuals who have been touched by cancer and could benefit from music therapy. These relationships and the time spent engaging in music therapy are customized to create successful and positive outcomes. Music therapy benefits patients, family members, friends and other support people. It can be offered in a group setting or individually.

**Research**

- Music therapy can reduce high blood pressure, rapid heart rate, depression and sleeplessness.
- Music therapy, when used with antinausea medications for patients receiving high-dose chemotherapy, can help ease nausea and vomiting.
- Music may help decrease the overall intensity of pain when used with pain-relieving medications and may result in a decreased need for pain medicine in some patients.
- Quality of life of cancer patients receiving music therapy can improve.

Music therapy is offered at Norton Audubon Hospital, Norton Brownsboro Hospital, Norton Hospital and Norton Suburban Hospital. Call the Norton Cancer Institute Resource Centers at (502) 629-HOPE for more information or to schedule an appointment.

Sources: