



Top Tips for Daily Musical Activities Family Carers and Friends

Music can be very powerful in how it affects our mood, feelings, and memories. Listening to music for enjoyment is important for many people at any stage of life. Creating music and sounds can also be a good form of self-expression. It may also help our relative or friend to vent any frustration they might be feeling. Another benefit of music is that it can help to encourage or facilitate movement and maintain mobility.

Daily Practical things to make this happen:

General

- Check the hearing of your relative so the volume is appropriate
- Is the equipment giving good sound quality? Poor quality sound will be harder to hear and may become annoying
- Can the equipment be adjusted by your relative – is it accessible and easy to use (large buttons and simple to operate)
- Is there a remote control so it can be adjusted without getting up, or make sure it's in reach?
- Are spare batteries available for the remote control?

Radio

- Make sure the person's favourite radio channels are pre-programmed and they also know how to select them. Make a note or sign of what channels relate to which pre-programmed numbers then the individual or anyone helping them can select the right one
- Make sure there is access to information about what is on the radio, such as a newspaper or TV and radio guide, this will enable variety and a more informed choice of programmes
- Do others want to sit together to listen?
- Programmes such as Desert Island Discs are nice programmes to listen to together. Or there may be other programmes that can be sung along to
- Podcasts of radio programmes can also be downloaded which can make the listening time more convenient or allow repeat listening

There is now a huge amount and variety of music available on the internet which can be downloaded and played through a personal listening device. This can significantly increase the variety of music you have access to at a relatively low cost, obviously being careful to stay within the law! Many personal listening devices are quite small and fiddly to operate so may not be appropriate for all people, but good quality speakers can be bought relatively cheaply.

As mentioned above, think carefully about the choice of music and volume.

Personal Music

- Your relative may have their own selection of CDs and these are good ideas to suggest to their other friends or relatives as gifts
- Local lending libraries also often have a good selection of CDs which can increase the variety without increasing the cost. This can be a useful source of music for themed events which you may use infrequently

Background music can have many benefits but using it can also bring potential problems. Think about why you are playing the music - what do you hope to achieve by it and watch for signs of how your relative is reacting to it.

Benefits

Can add to the ambience / atmosphere of a room or setting

Can provide a theme or help to orientate individuals

Can have an impact on the persons mood such as relaxing or uplifting It may make it harder

Potential problems

The volume needs to be correct so it can be heard but is not too loud

It may be distracting or unsettling for those who find it hard to concentrate

for your relative to hear you speaking and lead to a loss of engagement

It should go without saying that music at home should be something that you can enjoy together!

If you would like to discuss the information included in this resource, please call the NAPA Helpline; our free and confidential activity support service.

