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INTERHAB INSERVICE

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**MUSIC THERAPY FOR ADULTS  
WITH INTELLECTUAL AND  
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

# TODAY'S OBJECTIVES

## 1. Background

- Music therapy profession
- What music therapy could look like with adults with IDD

## 2. Three Strategies

- Music for Transitions
- Musical Mnemonics
- Iso Principle



## WHAT IS MUSIC THERAPY?

- 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  
(American Music Therapy Association, 2005)



## WHAT IS MUSIC THERAPY?

- Music Therapy is the prescribed use, by a qualified music therapist, of music, music involvement, and the relationship that develops through shared experiences, to **promote health** in physical, cognitive, communicative, social, emotional, and spiritual domains (Bruscia, 2014; Matney, 2022)

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## Who?

- Infants
  - Premature
  - Developmentally delayed
- Children
  - Intellectual/developmental disability
- Adolescents
  - At risk
- Adults
  - Mental Health
  - TBI
  - Intellectual/developmental disability
- Older Adults
  - Well elderly
  - Dementia, Parkinson's

## Where?

- Medical Settings
  - Hospitals
    - NICU, PICU, Surgery, Oncology
  - Long term care, rehab
  - Hospice
- School Settings
  - Special education
  - Early intervention
- Mental and Behavioral Health Settings
- Correctional and Forensic Settings
- Community Settings
- Private Practice



## MUSIC THERAPY METHODS

- Recreative
- Composition
- Improvisation
- Receptive



## DEVELOPMENTAL DOMAINS

- Cognitive/Academic
- Motor
  - Fine
  - Gross
- Communication
  - Expressive
  - Receptive
- Social
- Emotional/Psychological
- Often looking to build skills that can functionally transfer to daily life, outside of the therapy setting
- BUT not always...

# MUSIC CENTERED MUSIC THERAPY

- Making the music-making experience accessible
- Enabling self-expression and community building







Simply by engaging  
in music, skills in  
those  
developmental  
domains are being  
practiced



MUSIC  
THERAPY

VS.

THERAPEUTIC  
MUSIC

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- Bachelor's entry into the field
- 4 years of coursework - trained musicians and trained therapists
  - Extensive classical training on primary instrument
  - Proficiency in guitar, piano, voice and percussion
- 6th month clinical internship (1200 supervised hours)
- Board certification exam → Music Therapist – Board Certified (MT-BC)
- Recertify with 100 continuing education hours every 5 years
- About 9,000+ MT-BC's in the US (CBMT, 2022)



# THREE MUSICAL STRATEGIES

**Music for  
Transitions**

**Musical  
Mnemonics**

**Iso  
Principle**

## I. MUSIC FOR TRANSITIONS

- Use a specific song to cue the transition from one task/activity or place to another
- Build associations of certain songs with given activities
  - Support typical day to day routines
  - Bigger changes
- Helps build familiarity with routine and understand/remember what's coming next
- Emotional regulation across transitions

## I. MUSIC FOR TRANSITIONS



Going on a walk



Leaving for work



Putting away  
video games



- No formula for this! Make it whatever you need
  - Can be literal if that's helpful
  - Can simply be based on preference
- Let consumers help decide what the pairings will be
- Coordinate across people and settings



## 2. MUSICAL MNEMONICS

- Formal Neurologic Music Therapy technique
  - Musical Mnemonics Training (MMT) uses music as a mnemonic device to **sequence and organize information and add meaning, pleasure, emotion, and motivation in order to enhance the person's ability to learn and recall the information involved** (Thaut, 2005)
- LOTS of research that shows how impactful music is at supporting memory mechanisms
  - Help the brain look for patterns.
  - Create meaningful associations with information (especially when paired with visuals)
  - Rhythm, rhyme, and alliteration are especially powerful

## 2. MUSICAL MNEMONICS

- Examples



## 2. MUSICAL MNEMONICS

- Emergency contact information
- Personal information (address, birthdate)
- Steps for a job they are completing
- Etc.



## 2. MUSICAL MNEMONICS

- It doesn't have to be complicated.
- Use simple, **familiar** songs and change the words.
- Make up your own melodies (It doesn't need to sound "good" to be effective!)
- Lots of repetition
- Pair with visuals or actions

### 3. ISO PRINCIPLE

- *“...a technique by which music is matched with the mood of a client, then gradually altered to affect the desired mood state. This technique can also be used to affect physiological responses.” (Davis, Gfeller, & Thaut, 2008).*

### 3. ISO PRINCIPLE MUSICAL ELEMENTS

- Rhythm
- Meter
- Harmony
- Melody
- Pitch
- Timbre
- Form
- Texture
- Dynamics
- Tempo
- Lyrics
- Style



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## Stimulative

- **Rhythm:** complex, syncopated, unpredictable
- **Pitch:** wide range
- **Harmony:** frequent dissonances
- **Melody:** sporadic, big jumps
- **Texture:** complex, thick, many layers
- **Timbres:** abrasive, diverse, less familiar
- **Form:** unpredictable, little repetition
- **Dynamics:** louder, or sudden fluctuations
- **Tempo:** faster
- **Lyrics:** complex, lots of information, little repetition

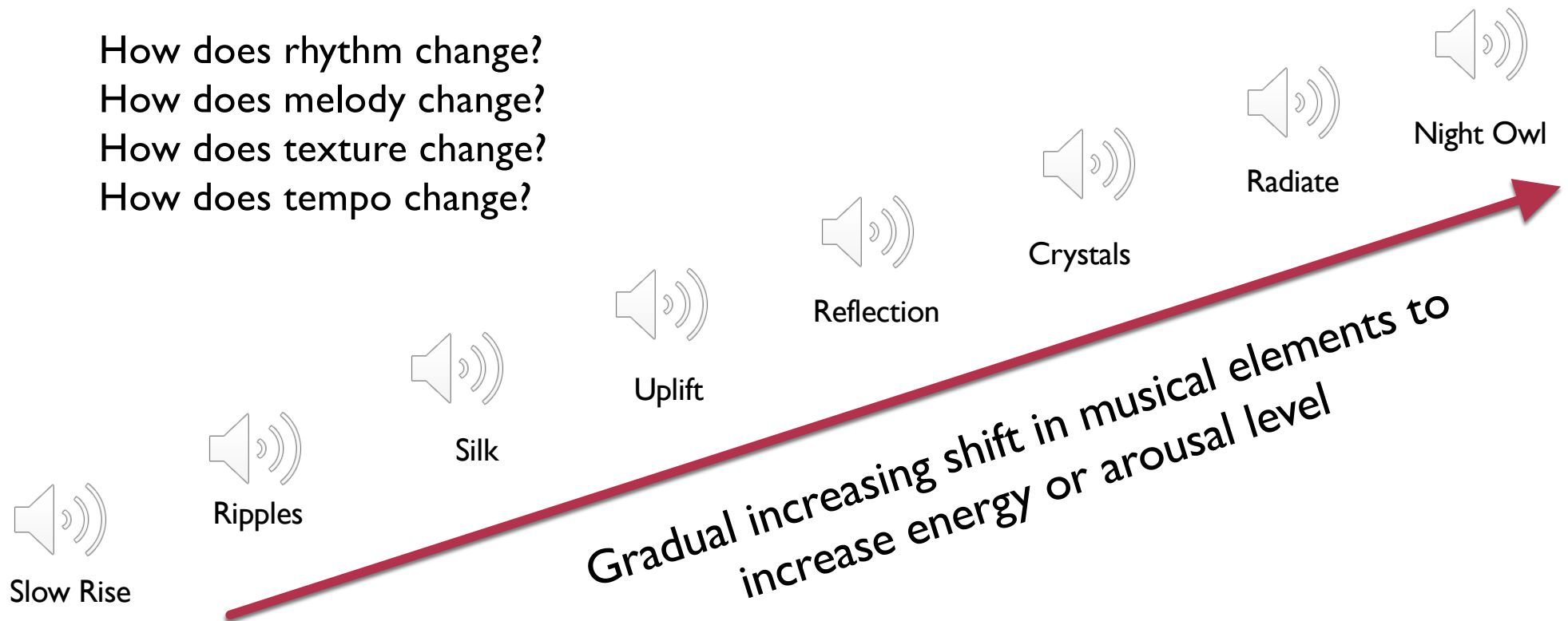
## Sedative

- **Rhythm:** simple, steady, predictable
- **Pitch:** small range
- **Harmony:** consonant
- **Melody:** smooth, flowing, stepwise, long durations
- **Texture:** thin, few layers
- **Timbre:** gentle, similar, familiar
- **Form:** predictable, repetitive, consistent
- **Dynamics:** softer, or gradual fluctuations
- **Tempo:** slower
- **Lyrics:** repetitive

### 3. ISO PRINCIPLE

#### LOW → HIGH AROUSAL WITH IPHONE RINGTONES

How does rhythm change?  
How does melody change?  
How does texture change?  
How does tempo change?



### 3. ISO PRINCIPLE

HIGH → LOW AROUSAL PLAYLIST



Gradual shift in musical elements to decrease  
energy or arousal level

## I WANNA DANCE WITH SOMEBODY

- **Tempo:** fast
- **Dynamics:** primarily loud
- **Texture:** robust
- **Timbre:** unique, diverse
- **Rhythm:** complex in melody and in drum set
- **Form:** dramatic chorus



## MY SHOT

- **Form:** unpredictable
- **Dynamics:** sudden changes
- **Rhythm:** strong backbeat, syncopation
- **Tempo:** fast
- **Lyrics:** complicated



## UPSIDE DOWN

- **Tempo:** upbeat
- **Style:** relaxed
- **Texture:** thinner
- **Melody:** smooth
- **Form:** predictable





## CARDIGAN

- **Tempo:** moderate
- **Timbres:** soft and congruent
- **Melody:** smooth, long
- **Style:** relaxed
- **Rhythm:** steady and predictable



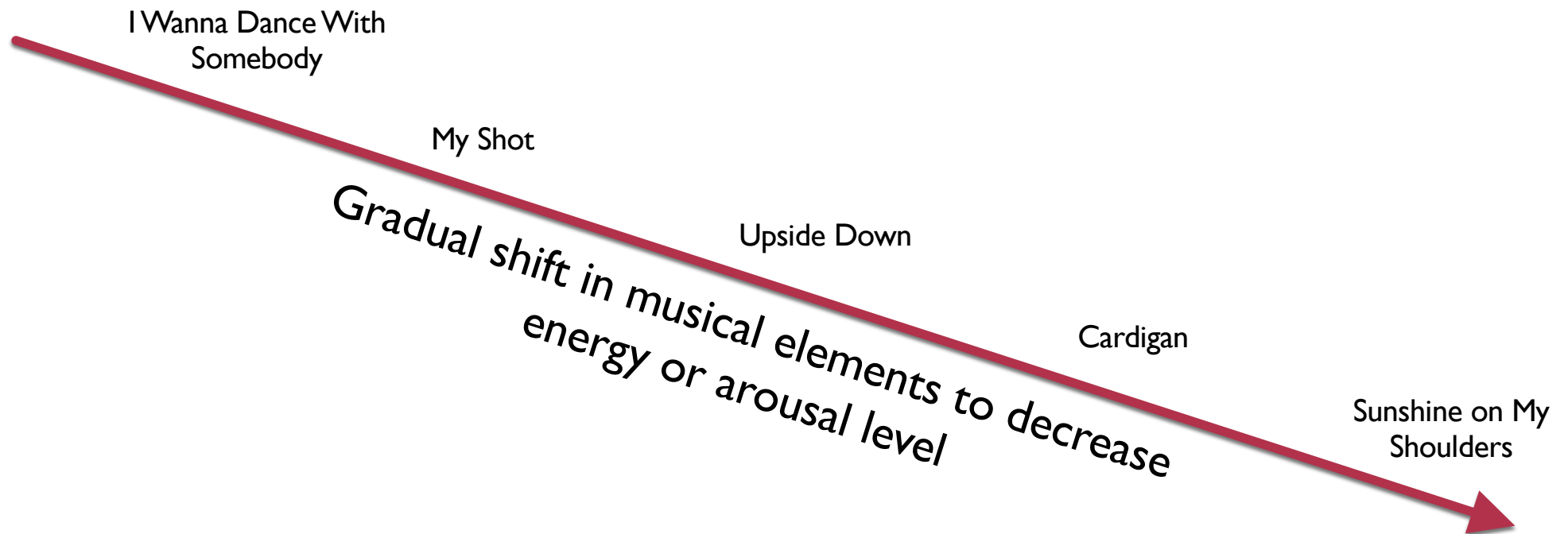
## SUNSHINE ON MY SHOULDERS

- **Tempo:** slow
- **Melody:** long, smooth, drawn out
- **Style:** calm, arpeggiated
- **Rhythm:** simple, steady
- **Texture:** thin



### 3. ISO PRINCIPLE

#### HIGH → LOW AROUSAL PLAYLIST



### 3. ISO PRINCIPLE

## CURATE YOUR OWN PLAYLISTS

- Low → High OR High → Low
  - Physiological arousal (energy level)
  - mood
- Be gradual about the shift
  - Could happen in 10 minutes
  - Could happen in 30-40 minutes
- There are no absolutes
  - This is subjective
  - Trial and error
- MEET THEM WHERE THEY ARE!
- CONSIDER MUSICAL PREFERENCE

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Music for Transitions

Musical Mnemonics

Iso Principle

THREE MUSICAL STRATEGIES

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REACH OUT!

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