

How to Use Music to Connect with Your Aging Loved One

How often do you hear a song that reminds you of a special event or time in your life? Chances are, you are like most people and have a strong cognitive connection between music and life events. Seniors are certainly no different, linking a specific song to time in their life. Even through late stage dementia, seniors are often able to hum or sing along to music that they grew up with.

Using music as an intervention with aging adults over the age of 65 is well researched and proven to assist in emotional and cognitive pursuits. Music interventions have been linked to better short term memory, decreased feelings of depression, and even increased physical healing potential among aging adults. But even with all of the positive research, there is still much to learn about the benefits of music with seniors. If you are looking to find a tool to connect with your loved one, music may just hit the right note.



Sing-a-Long

Turn on tunes from your loved one's childhood or young adulthood and sing! If your loved one has memory issues, try working with old hymns (if those would be familiar to them) or other music that would have been popular when they were ages 12-20.

Drum to the Beat

Drumming can be emotionally, cognitively, and physically beneficial for seniors. Plus, it's just plain fun. Whether you are using a tambourine, two wooden spoons to click together, or just your hands and a countertop, drumming to the beat of a song can be a wonderful way to spend time.

Whistle While You Work

Sing favorite songs while you help your loved one with chores or personal care tasks. This simple activity can go a long way in keeping everyone comfortable and happy during otherwise boring – or embarrassing – times of day.

Complete the Lyrics

Print or look up lyrics online for some of your loved one's favorite tunes. Use that information to

play games of 'finish the lyrics'. See if you can stump your loved one; you may be surprised at how much they know!

Commercial Jingles

Advertisers have been creating jingles that we just can't get out of our heads for decades. Sing some together and see who can finish the most lyrics. Try "the best part of waking up, is _____ (Folger's in your cup!), or "my bologna has a first name....".

Wind Down

When times of anxiety or insomnia set in, using soft and calming music can be a lifesaver. Try playing classic hymns, classical music, or even Gregorian chants to bring a calmer atmosphere around your home.

Looking for more tools to help connect with your loved one? [Check out our Family Resource Center](#) or give our friendly office staff a call to [set up a consultation](#).

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