



ACADEMIC CONSORTIUM  
FOR **INTEGRATIVE**  
MEDICINE & HEALTH

## IMPACT CIRCLES

A yearlong series of Academic Consortium member successes in integrative innovation and implementation, intended to inspire new ideas and programs throughout the integrative medicine community, worldwide, in 2021.

## MUSIC THERAPY

Music's healing power is well documented, recognized in the healthcare community since the second World War. Research has confirmed music therapy's effectiveness in physical rehabilitation, patient motivation in treatment and emotional support for clients and their families. Appreciation for music's therapeutic and overall benefit to our well-being has received a prolonged public boost during the COVID-19 pandemic. Network and local concerts, social media singalongs, neighborhood and personal serenades, though outside the lines of "clinical" music therapy, became a welcome tonic to our collective need for community and social connection. Understanding its benefits, and given its history and current public embrace, how is music therapy best positioned within the current healthcare matrix of integrative services? What is its relationship to the business of care?



**Seneca Block, MA, MT-BC** leads one of the nation's largest integrative music therapy programs, covering 10 medical centers within the University Hospitals Connor Integrative Health Network. He currently is working on the implementation of music therapy into standard healthcare models, including both general medical and psychiatric settings. As a board-certified music therapist, he is dedicated to optimizing patient outcomes and enhancing the patient experience through the healing power of music. As program manager, Expressive Therapies, he guides the business side of services, while cultivating the positive system-level impact that a fully integrated music therapy program has on the institution's culture, particularly meaningful during times of stress.

The program at Connor Integrative Health Network began 37 years ago in a central location with a few therapists and now includes 13 board-certified music therapists, an art therapist, three music therapy interns, one art intern and a dance/movement intern. Services are referral-based and available to any patient. Patients may choose to make music, write or record a song, sing, learn how to use music to relax, or simply listen to music created by the therapist.

Seneca credits growth in the program to University Hospital's visionary leadership and mentorship received through Connor Integrative Health Network. With a demonstrated commitment to integrative medicine as well as a recognition of its unique benefits, the Connor integrative Health Network paved the way for his business proposals and programs in each of now 10 locations. *"There is so much need; music therapy is one of the most affordable nonpharmacologic services, with benefits seen across the entire spectrum of care. Our presence among the staff in each location makes us an integral, accepted part of the everyday team."*

Ten thousand patients benefitted from this program in 2020, demonstrating significant qualitative and quantitative reductions in stress, anxiety and pain and, more recently, benefits in coping. Study results have shown that, on average, a patient in pain can reduce their pain perception by 20 percent, through music.



*“Music therapy has an impact on the whole person,”* notes Seneca, which can aid in pain management, help “normalize” the healthcare environment for patients and reduce feelings of isolation. It has the added benefit of adapting well to remote and distance delivery.

*“Music is the universal language; music **therapy** is a positive agent of change,”* says Seneca. **Integrative music therapy** programs bring these elements together for maximum benefit in healthcare.

## INTEGRATIVE MUSIC THERAPY PROGRAM - ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

1. Consider the possibilities for your program within the integrative healthcare landscape at your institution, i.e., centralized or embedded in each care center.
2. Incorporate music therapy as a therapy option within the operating system so that physicians can conveniently make this selection for their patients when deciding the overall treatment plan.
3. Identify an expert in the modalities of music therapy who is willing to serve as program champion, creating and communicating increased awareness system-wide.
4. Recognize the business of providing services; look for measurable results that can be shared with decision-makers.
5. Consider internships to help build service extension.

## RESOURCES

- Contact [Seneca Block](#) at University Hospitals Connor Integrative Health Network
- [American Music Therapy Association \(AMTA\)](#)
- [Receptive music therapy to reduce stress and improve wellbeing in clinical staff](#)
- [Video: The Musical Brain | Sting | Michael Bublé | Feist](#)
- [Academic Consortium – Expressive Therapies \(requires member login\)](#)
- [Video: Music Therapy Relieves Patient Stress, Pain and Anxiety](#)

Each year the National Coalition of Creative Arts Therapies Associations (NCCATA) promotes the third week in March when creative arts therapists and organizations highlight their work to the public and to other professionals.