Music Therapy in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)

Brianna Negrete, MM, MT-BC,
NICU MT
Music Therapy in the NICU

Brianna Negrete, MM, MT-BC, NICU Music Therapist

- B.A. Music Therapy, California State University, Northridge
- M.M. Music Therapy, Florida State University
- Clinical Internship at Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare
Music Stimuli in the NICU
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- Providing music to the premature infant
  - Live is most effective
  - What other infants will be hearing the music
  - Using controlled speaker

- Lullabies promote language development with
  - emphasis on vowels
  - rising/falling phrases
  - recognition of soothing sounds
  - can be provided in the native language of the infant’s family
Music Stimuli in the NICU

- Recorded Music
  - Must be at least 28 weeks gestation
  - Shortening Length of Stay
  - More stable oxygen saturation levels

- Elements of Music
  - Steady, Constant, Soothing
  - Major Key
  - Mother’s voice
Signs of Overstimulation

- Positive Signs of Stimulation:
  - Smiling
  - Vocalizing
  - Eye Contact
  - Cuddling
  - Head Orientation

- Negative Signs of Stimulation:
  - Crying
  - Grimacing
  - Halt Hand
  - Tongue Protrusion
  - Finger Splay
  - Turning Away
Neurodevelopmental Stimulation

- At least 32 weeks gestation
- 3 pounds and medically stable
- Increase tolerance to stimulation in the NICU to prepare for discharge
- Train parents how to use music with their infants and learn about signs of overstimulation
- Females went home on average 15.7 days sooner and males were discharged on average 8.2 days earlier.
- Females responded more with guitar and singing and males responded more positively with only singing, no guitar.
- Increased visitation from parents

Feeding

- Suck, Swallow, Breathe Response
- Pacifier Activated Lullaby
  - Used to increase sucking endurance
  - To develop sucking burst of 10-12 sucks before pause
  - To reduce pain perception
  - Decrease Oral Aversion

Older Infants

- 38-40 weeks old

Developmentally Appropriate Recommendations
- Auditory
- Visual
- Tactile
- Vestibular
Family Support

- Lullaby Writing
- Parent Education
- Family Dynamics
  - Emotions
    - Denial
    - Anxiety and worry
    - Detachment, uncertainty
    - Grief
  - Economic Concerns
    - Transportation
    - Work
    - Cost of hospitalization