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Music has Power

By David Bull - www.caregiver4caregivers.com

For people with memory loss, music and songs have a special significance. As the long term memory is activated it restores a sense of 'remembered self'. Music creates relaxation, a return to fond memories and feelings of calm and security. Music reorients the person and distracts them from the stresses of life. It may help to lift a person out of depression.

Music has power—especially for individuals with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. And it can spark compelling outcomes even in the very late stages of the disease. When used appropriately, music can shift mood, manage stress-induced agitation, stimulate positive interactions, facilitate cognitive function, and coordinate motor movements.

"I grew up in a musical family. My mother played piano, My father was a jazz pianist and my brother is still a professional touring musician, composer and teacher. In fact all my brothers and sisters including me learned to play several instruments and have many fond music related memories throughout my life. Once we had placed my mother into the nursing home, I also recall many occasions where my father would go in and play old big band and dixieland Jazz music on the piano. I recall watching with the nursing staff how my mother and the residents would attentively listen, clap, sing or even dance with each other and the nurses as he played. It was at times like they had re-visited a period of their lives at a dance or concert". .. Personal reflection by caregiver

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