



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Using the power of music to support care workers

- ***Stress and burnout at its highest reported amongst health and social care workers.***
- ***Music for Dementia encourages care workers to unlock the power of music to support their own health and wellbeing***

Against a backdrop of workforce challenges, funding pressures and concerns about staff wellbeing, with stress and burnout being at its highest reported amongst health and social care workers from the pandemic, the care workforce needs supporting to manage these pressures.

Grace Meadows, Campaign Director at Music for Dementia said:

“For several decades now, music has been used in dementia care to support and enhance quality of life. The evidence base for its effectiveness and impact has been growing, but it remains for many something that is considered a nicety and not a necessity to support those living with dementia and caregivers. As we recover and rehabilitate from the pandemic, now more than ever we need to use the power of music to support the social care workforce in the essential work they do in caring for people living with dementia in care settings. Music has many therapeutic benefits that can help the care workforce improve their own health and wellbeing to cope with many of the pressures experienced by care workers like stress, burnout and anxiety.”

For music to be an integral part of dementia care in care settings, it is essential that care workers are empowered and given the skills to use music, in all its different forms, as part of the day-to-day delivery and support provided to people with dementia living in care settings.

Research and lived experiences show that music can help reduce the often distressing symptoms of dementia, such as agitation and anxiety, but these benefits are not restricted to the person living with dementia, they also extend to caregivers.

Managing stress

Research suggests that music has significant power to help reduce stress and anxiety. A highly stressful situation can cause your heart rate and blood pressure to produce cortisol, also known as the stress hormone.

Short-term, cortisol can help us find the focus and energy we need to deal with difficult situations but if the body is exposed to excess cortisol for a prolonged period, it causes exhaustion and can lead to anxiety, depression and other health conditions. Music can be used as a therapeutic tool to help reduce stress and promote healing to improve the overall emotional wellbeing.

Music can also help manage anxiety. Data from University College London (UCL) suggests that people who spent 30 minutes or more each day during the pandemic on arts activities, such as listening to music have lower reported rates of depression and anxiety, and a greater life satisfaction.

The Spitz Charitable Trust takes professional musicians into care homes, day centres and hospitals and are embedded in Bridgeside Lodge care home in Islington, London. Through live music they connect with people to help improve their wellbeing and quality of life. Jane Glitre, Director of The Spitz Charitable Trust said:

“After the first lockdown when no one could go in to care homes, we were welcomed back as long-lost friends and at that point we noticed a significant shift – there was greater equality and partnership in how we worked together with the care staff. There was no longer the feeling of us and them. The staff began to see us as being essential to supporting them to do their work in supporting people living with dementia in their care.”

Agnes, Nurse from Bridgeside Lodge, said “For us carers coming to work isn’t always easy. When I come into this environment, music gives me more power to do my job, more energy. It helps the residents to relax and feel less anxious, which helps me to do a better job. A job that I can enjoy because I see the residents happy. And when they are happy then I’m happy.”

Grace Meadows continues “Emotional exhaustion can impact our ability to switch off. We want to see care workers use the power of music to support their own health and wellbeing so that they personally experience music’s multiple benefits in their own lives, especially as they support and care for people living with dementia. Although not a magical cure or a substitute for medication or any other professional intervention, music can be an important element of self-care.”

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

About Music for Dementia

[Music for Dementia](#), is the cross-sector campaign to make music a standard part of dementia care. We include more than 200 organisations from the NHS, care sector, third sector and music sector plus thousands of individual supporters, many with lived experience.

About The Utley Foundation

[The Utley Foundation](#) was founded in 2014 by Neil and Nicky Utley. The Foundation exists to advance social causes and to act as a catalyst for greater funding and wider action for the causes it supports. Music is a personal passion of the founders and trustees and underpins many of the key funding areas of interest to the foundation. The trust has other charitable objectives including Armed Forces Veterans, Children and Overseas Aid.

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