



An Introduction To
MUSIC &
MEMORY
LOSS

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HOW MUSIC *helps* MEMORY

Musical memory can survive even when areas of the brain associated with other forms of recall have been damaged by dementia or Alzheimer's disease. The right tune at the right time can have a truly astounding effect on people living with memory impairment.

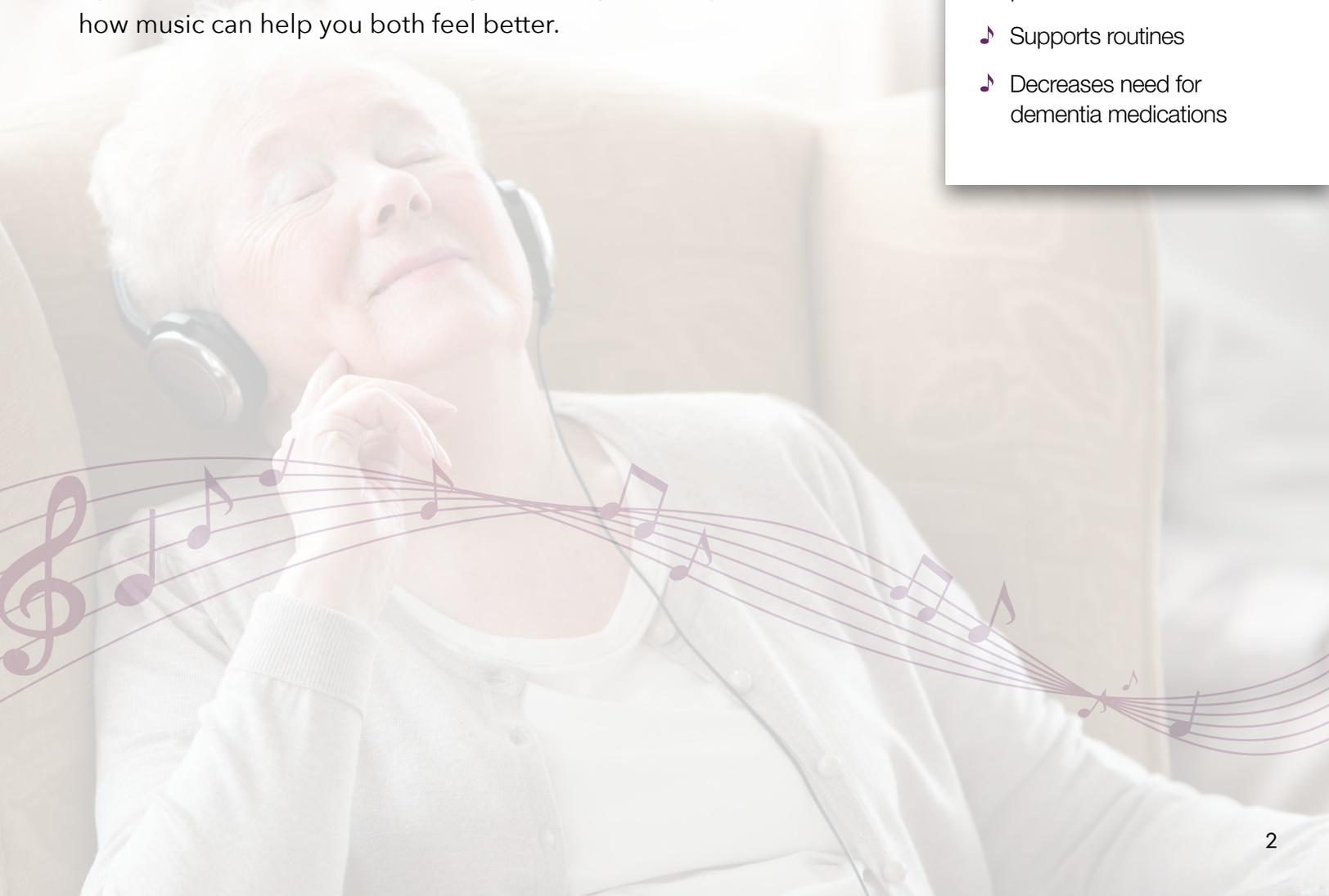
Music therapy can improve memory, cognition, and even mood. It can help people with memory loss follow their routines without resistance. It can reduce their anxiety and stress. It can even help their caregivers communicate and connect better.

In Florida, more than half a million people are living with Alzheimer's disease, the most common cause of dementia. The stress this creates on caregivers can be overwhelming, especially if their loved one is agitated and resistant to their help. Use this practical guide to learn how music can help you both feel better.



Benefits of Music

- ♪ Boosts memory and cognition
- ♪ Elevates mood
- ♪ Enhances communications
- ♪ Increases feelings of security
- ♪ Reduces anxiety, depression & agitation
- ♪ Improves cooperation with personal care assistance
- ♪ Supports routines
- ♪ Decreases need for dementia medications



THE *science* OF MUSIC

Extensive research has proven the benefits of music therapy for those living with dementia and Alzheimer's disease. That means music can reach your loved one when words and actions fail, whether you're trying to get their attention or comfort or calm them during periods of agitation or anxiety.

MUSIC IS NONINVASIVE

Up to 75% of those with dementia are thought to have symptoms such as aggression, depression and mood swings. Symptoms are often treated with antidepressant, antipsychotic and anticonvulsant prescription medications. While these treatments work well for some, they don't for others, or the risks of taking them outweigh the benefits.

Studies have shown that individualized music therapy can be effective in reducing neuropsychiatric symptoms, without the medication side effects.

MUSIC IS PERSONAL

All of us have different musical tastes and memories. Your loved one with dementia is no different. One study published in International Psychogeriatrics found that personalized music reduced agitation significantly more than standardized classical music for a group with severe cognitive impairment.

Another study published in Alzheimer's & Dementia, the Journal of the Alzheimer's Association, focused on using personalized music that individual patients had enjoyed for a long time—at least 20 years. These old favorites helped improve functional brain connectivity and cognitive ability in patients with mild cognitive impairment and early Alzheimer's disease.



Top Hits in Research

- ♪ People with dementia come alive when they hear music from their youth
- ♪ Personally meaningful music reduces agitation, anxiety & negative behaviors
- ♪ The "Mozart Effect": Piano Sonata enhances space-time reasoning
- ♪ Pachelbel's Canon calms & relaxes
- ♪ Show tunes improve cognitive test scores



CONNECTING THROUGH *music*

As you explore music interventions at home, keep a close watch on your loved one's reaction to music you offer. Some songs can soothe, others can energize, and still others can upset. The reaction may not always make sense to you, but it doesn't have to. Your goal is to communicate through music to improve quality of life.

Discover musical tastes. You may remember songs your loved one used to listen to, and that's a great place to start. Find out more about the music they associate with happy times in their life.

Minimize distractions. Research refers to music as an "island of preservation" for those living with dementia. Limit outside noise and avoid music with commercial interruptions.

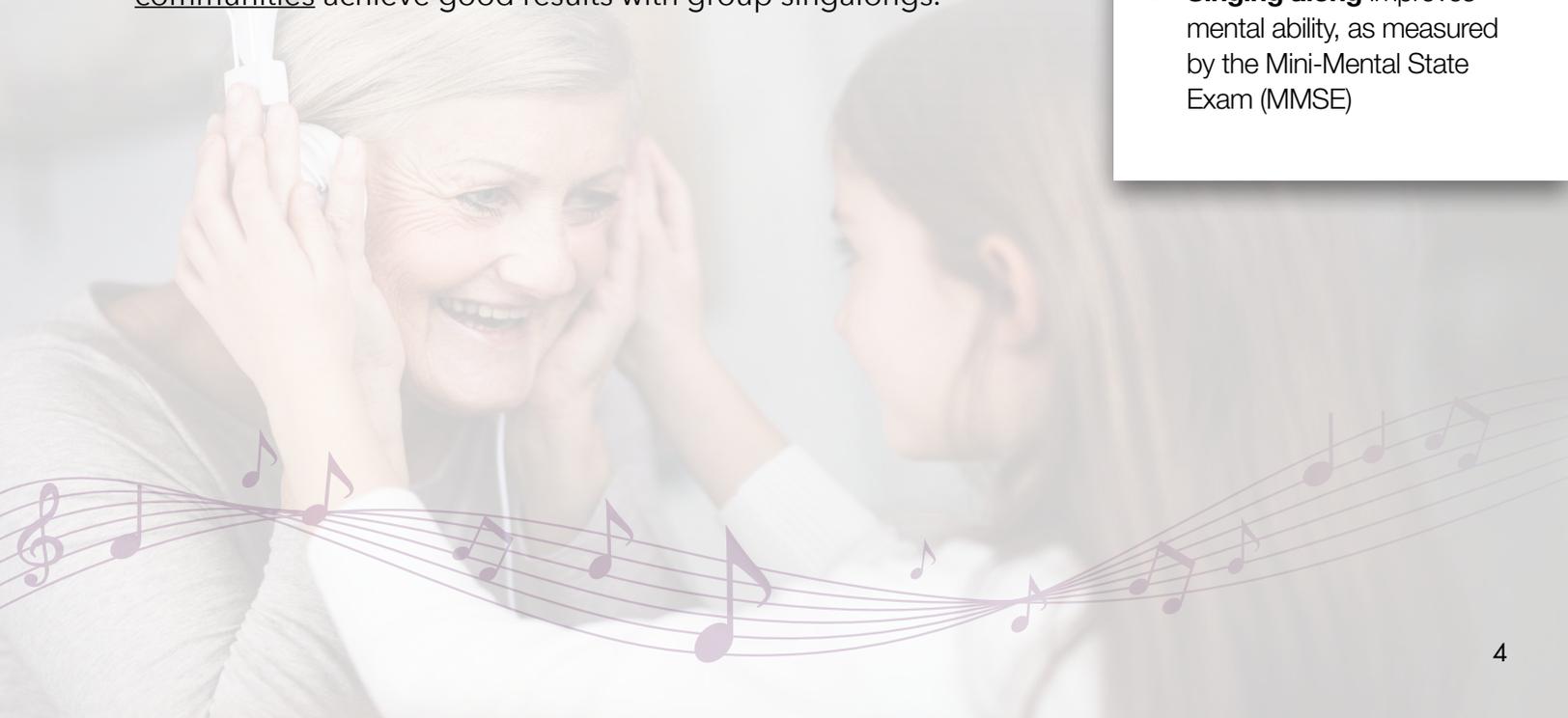
Get involved. Listening to music together can go a long way in reducing your own stress. As you realize it's not too late to make special memories, you may find yourself enjoying your loved one's company.

Let the music move you. If your loved one taps their feet, claps, or sings along—it's working. Don't be afraid to try to join in and see how your loved one reacts. Many assisted living communities achieve good results with group singalongs.



The Magic of Music

- ♪ **Listening to music** improves our spatial reasoning skills
- ♪ **Playing an instrument** strengthens the areas of our brain that control our hearing, motor skills & information storage
- ♪ **Learning to play an instrument** improves problem-solving & enables multi-tasking
- ♪ **Singing along** improves mental ability, as measured by the Mini-Mental State Exam (MMSE)



Duets BY SONATA

A program offered by Sonata Senior Living, Duets, draws from the science of music and dementia to develop a personalized radio station for each resident. Through wireless headphones, residents can listen to their favorite songs during periods of agitation and anxiety. Music is also offered as a source of entertainment and a means of creating a safe space.

MUSIC FOR INDIVIDUALS

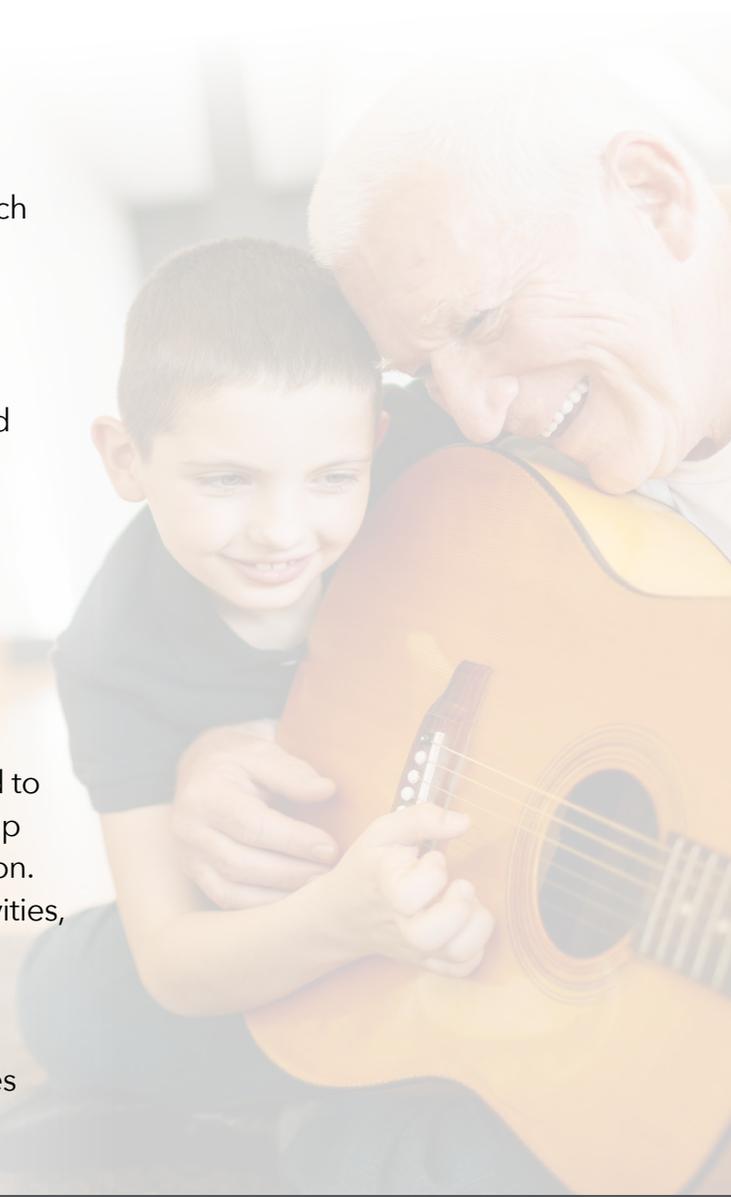
To understand which songs will be most beneficial to each resident, the Sonata team interviews friends and family about their loved one's favorite music genres.

If a resident is feeling overwhelmed, Duets' headphones can help create a private retreat where they can relax and escape distractions. If someone seems nervous about a bath, a well-chosen soundtrack can help reduce their resistance to receiving help with their personal care.

MUSIC FOR ALL

Duets by Sonata uses music and sounds from nature to create a peaceful, relaxed environment. Music is also used to establish a sense of routine, which has been proven to help ease symptoms such as wandering, agitation and confusion. Songs are used to get residents excited about group activities, establish that it's time for dinner, and set the mood for a relaxing night's sleep.

To learn more about Duets, [schedule a tour](#) of a Serenades Memory Care Community.



According to research, the following areas of the brain stay intact in people with dementia—and can be accessed through music.

- **Motor cortices** help us make plans and execute movements
- **Anterior cingulate gyrus** aids in motivation, decision-making, and conflict resolution
- **Orbitofrontal cortex** regulates our emotions and manages impulses

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