



# MENTAL HEALTH MONDAYS



## Key Takeaways – June 1, 2020 | 10 a.m.

Tracey Failla, board certified music therapist at Golisano Children’s Hospital

“Music Therapy for Mental Wellness”

At the hospital we use music for pain and relaxation; we make videos and songs with patients for expression. A lot of the tools we use can be used at home.

1. **Song-writing activity helps get thoughts and expressions out.** Writing your feelings on paper can be a great way to process what you are going through. In music therapy, we do piggy-backing, which is taking a song that already exists and taking things out and changing things around. You are still singing a familiar song and making it your own. It’s a way to express thoughts and emotions about what’s been going on and how it’s affecting us. For example, “Don’t Worry, Be Happy”. We changed the lyrics: Here’s a little song we wrote, now we are going to sing it note for note. Don’t worry, be happy. Lately life has been real sad, but we can talk to someone to help. Don’t worry, be happy. So sometimes we feel overwhelmed and nervous, but we can exercise to feel better. Don’t worry, be happy. When we feel down we can jump or talk to friends to make us smile.
2. **Actively making music can improve your mood.** Research shows that singing or playing instruments is positive and has a positive impact on your mental wellness. Snapping, clapping and tapping along to music is making music! Switching between rhythms at certain times in a song is a great cognitive exercise. It requires you to use your listening skills. You are listening for a certain part of a song and switching to a different activity. It’s something we use quite often with patients who may have had a brain injury or memory issues.
3. **Listening to your preferred music can help lower stress levels.** It doesn’t have to be slow or classical to be relaxing. What music is relaxing to you is individual. I have met patients who want to listen to heavy metal or other kinds of music that I might not necessarily think is relaxing. There is no right or wrong answer for what music might be relaxing. Music can help you think about happier times. Music can be a great way to improve your mood.
4. **Guided imagery exercise.** Here is a guided imagery script you can use: “Get in a comfortable position. Close your eyes and take deep breaths. Feel your lungs expand with each inhale, contracting with each exhale. Feel your body open with each new breath. Feel your muscles relax, all tension from the day leaving your body and mind. Notice your mind becomes calmer and uncluttered with worry. With each deep breath,

feel yourself deepening further into quiet, alert relaxation. As you continue to relax, gently follow your breath deeper. Notice how it feels simply to breathe. Be aware of how calm and still your body has become in this peaceful and relaxed state. We all have an inner space within us, deep in our subconscious. Allow yourself to become aware of that space within you. Settle into it. Notice what it feels like. Be aware of how you feel inside of that space. Relax more fully into this quiet place. As you become more accustomed to this space, you notice that thoughts and worries gradually disappear until your mind is completely quiet and still. Rest here in this space. This quiet place is part of you, and you can return here whenever you like, as often as you need to. It's a place of rejuvenation, refreshment and rest. Bring your attention back to your breath. Take a deep inhale, exhale. Inhale, exhale. Noticing how calm and relaxed your body feels, gently open your awareness to this time and place and surroundings. Wiggle your fingers and toes. Gently begin to move your body. When you are ready, you can open your eyes." It's something we use with patients for distracting from pain, encouraging deep breathing and those types of things. If this is not relaxing to you, I encourage you to figure out what music or things that help you relax that you can use when you are feeling overwhelmed or stressed out to help bring you back to the moment of inner peace.

## Questions from viewers:

### **Q: Is music therapy affective for adults?**

A: There is a lot of research that shows music therapy is effective for adults and kids. We work in a lot of different healthcare or educational settings. There are music therapists who work in adult hospitals. I know therapists who work in correctional facilities, mental health settings, VA hospitals, hospice agencies, school systems.

### **Q: Can this work with children with ADHD?**

A: There is research that shows music therapy to be helpful. For children with ADHD, music therapy is considered a related service under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), so if your child has an Individualized Education Program (IEP), depending on which school district you live in there might be a music therapist who is either an employee of the school district or does contract work who can address a lot of those goals. There's a great private music therapy practice in Fort Myers called House of Music Therapy. A good friend of mine runs it. She works with children who have learning disabilities or special needs, so if this is a therapy you are interested in for your child, I would highly recommend reaching out to House of Music Therapy. She's fantastic.





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## About Kids' Minds Matter

The goal of Kids' Minds Matter is to raise awareness about the need for pediatric mental and behavioral health care services and to raise the funds required to make these services available in the region through Golisano Children's Hospital of Southwest Florida and Lee Health. An estimated 46,000 Southwest Florida children are impacted by mental and behavioral health disorders like anxiety, depression, eating disorders, psychosis, substance abuse, autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. As part of the region's strategic solution to the children's mental and behavioral health epidemic in Southwest Florida, Kids' Minds Matter is dedicated to fostering partnerships that support existing services, identifying and filling gaps in the continuum of care, and innovating new treatments.

Philanthropic support for Kids' Minds Matter has allowed Lee Health and Golisano Children's Hospital of Southwest Florida to: implement a tiered model of care that clinically aligns community, inpatient and outpatient care; hire additional psychiatrists, child advocates and other mental health professionals; offer Mental Health First Aid training to local pediatricians, emergency service providers and others who work directly with children; renovate an outpatient center in Fort Myers where a child's needs can be addressed in a therapeutic setting; and launch a first-of-its-kind Pediatric Digital Cognitive Behavioral Health diagnostic and treatment protocols interlaced with Tele-Psychology support to treat anxiety, depression and trauma. Most recently, Kids' Minds Matter introduced mental health care navigators into Lee and Collier County schools who will help families find resources and care to address their child's mental healthcare needs.

The "Mental Health Mondays" segments are a public forum, designed for open discussions that benefit a large audience, and to provide real-time resources and advice from pediatric mental health professionals and advocates. The information shared on this platform is intended for general public consumption and not intended for individual treatment. The views, advice, and resources shared by each guest speaker are solely their own and are not endorsed by Lee Health, Golisano Children's Hospital of Southwest Florida and Kids' Minds Matter. Kids' Minds Matter is dedicated to raising awareness and essential funding to enhance pediatric mental & behavioral health programs, services and access to care in Southwest Florida. To learn more about Kids' Minds Matter, visit [KidsMindsMatter.com](http://KidsMindsMatter.com).

