

# Music Therapist Job Interview Questions And Answers



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## Music Therapist Interview Questions And Answers Guide.

### Question - 1:

Tell us any last piece of advice?

#### Ans:

I think it is important to focus on your strengths. If you love working with the elderly, than specialize in that. If you do your best work with kids, than focus on that population. Once you find your niche, find mentors in the music therapy field and other related fields, and develop deep and long-term relationships with them. The most successful people, no matter what the field, all have mentors to guide them along the way.

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### Question - 2:

Explain me a bit about your work as a music therapist?

#### Ans:

I am in private practice and specialize in working with children with special needs. I see clients individually and in groups in the home, clinic and school settings. I also supervise two music therapists and I am a mentor to young music therapists just starting out.

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### Question - 3:

Tell us why do you feel the music therapy approach of this course is right for you?

#### Ans:

Psychotherapeutic is I believe an approach that I can truly relate to and understand as I have seen the powerful tool of music as a mechanism to facilitate therapy-through music studies of various repertoire I have seen music's expressive capacity.

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### Question - 4:

Tell me how do you use music therapy with children who don't have special needs?

#### Ans:

Usually, music therapists are not asked to work with neuro-typical children. But that does not mean typical children can't benefit from music therapy. If I were to work with a typical child, I would find out if she or he had any academic, social or behavioural difficulties and focus my interventions on those areas. We would be using music to work on non-musical goals.

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### Question - 5:

Tell us what is one of your favorite music therapeutic activities?

#### Ans:

I wrote a song called "Copy My Beat" where a client needs to listen to my drum beat and then repeat what I do. It is a great song for imitation, correspondent counting, sequencing, receptive communication, sustained attention and many other goals. It is also adaptable to different developmental levels by changing the complexity of your rhythmic pattern.

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### Question - 6:

Explain me how can music therapy be used to teach school subjects better?

#### Ans:

For particular subjects, music therapists can put academic information into a song format to make it easier for a child to remember. It is a similar approach to the one most of us grew up with, such as learning our ABCs with the ABC song.

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### Question - 7:



Tell us what do music therapists do?

**Ans:**

Music therapists do many things. I personally work with a variety of clients through a music contracting company. I work with children with severe emotional disturbance and also some with developmental handicaps. I also work in a nursing home. Outside of the contract work, I do a kindermusic program - an early childhood music program.

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**Question - 8:**

Tell us how do you think music-therapy will develop in the next 10 years?

**Ans:**

Internationally, I think that music therapy will become an established field of study and profession in many more countries. It is already in more than 70 countries worldwide, but that will increase.

In the US, I think that it will become more commonplace in settings such as hospitals, nursing homes, and schools. We are rapidly growing as a field and there are new positions being created on a weekly basis. There is also more research being done worldwide and this will help guide the work of future music therapists.

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**Question - 9:**

Tell me what do you like most about being a music therapist?

**Ans:**

I enjoy helping clients reach unattainable goals. Music therapy touches people the way no other therapy does.

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**Question - 10:**

Can you tell us something about your job?

**Ans:**

Whenever I think about my job as a music therapist, I feel very fortunate. It is such an innovative, engaging and rewarding line of work. Music therapy feeds the souls of my clients, as well as my own. It is truly a symbiotic relationship.

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**Question - 11:**

Tell me how does music therapy help a child cope with emotional stress?

**Ans:**

Research has shown that music therapy helps reduce muscle tension, increase self-esteem and decrease anxiety. It also provides a safe place for emotional expression and release.

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**Question - 12:**

Tell us what instruments are used and why?

**Ans:**

I use voice, guitar and a variety of percussive instruments. The guitar is great for being face to face with a client and also allowing me to move around freely. The percussive instruments are perfect since they are easy to play. Although piano, guitar, percussion and voice tend to be the most used instruments in the field of music therapy, there are a multitude of other instruments that are also used.

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**Question - 13:**

Tell me when did you realize you wanted to be a music therapist?

**Ans:**

When I spent my study hall in high school in the special education room. There was a student in the room with cerebral palsy and he loved music so much. We would sing together on the karaoke machine and it would benefit him in so many ways including self-confidence, as well as his speech.

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**Question - 14:**

Can you explain me about your education?

**Ans:**

I majored in Music Therapy and minored in Psychology to better my understanding of people and why they act the way they do.

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**Question - 15:**

Explain me what types of music do you play? Why those types of music?

**Ans:**

I play different styles of music depending on the age and interests of my client. With children, I tend to use children's music and with adolescents and adults, I use a lot of blues, folk, pop and rock. I do a lot of personalized song-writing for my clients so that I can have songs that address the specific goals they are working on. For example, I might write a song about using eye contact when greeting someone. My style is also very improvisational so I will make up songs in the moment to engage



my clients and help them meet their goals.

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### Question - 16:

Tell us is there anything you wish you had known before you chose this profession?

**Ans:**

I wish I would have known how challenging it would be to learn the piano! Music therapists have to pass a proficiency exam in piano and guitar. I cruised by with guitar since that is my primary instrument, but I struggled with piano, even after many lessons and much practice.

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### Question - 17:

Tell me where do you see yourself in 5 years as Music Therapist?

**Ans:**

I see myself helping people through music therapy and furthering my education.

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### Question - 18:

Tell us how do you use research to inform your music therapy practices?

**Ans:**

I use research to further expand my knowledge that I then take into a session with my clients. I will generally use research and journal articles when I do not fully understand something related to a client and their diagnosis. For example, when I started working with kiddos and cystic fibrosis, I researched information so I understood more about the disease itself, what challenges need to be overcome by the people who have it, what benefits them, and how I can implement music therapy in their treatments. I did a lot of research when I worked in the rehabilitation setting. There was a lot of information that I was receiving from my site supervisor, but not understanding fully. I had heard the terms and concepts before, but that was about it. An example, I had a client who had a stroke. She had aphasia and I had learned briefly about the aphasia, but I had never experienced it first hand. I learned that she had Broca's aphasia and I researched everything I could because I did not fully understand what it meant in comparison to Wernicke's aphasia. I use research a lot when I need to understand concepts and ideas better and to understand how those concepts and ideas are treated, tested, and effective for clients.

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### Question - 19:

Tell me which musical instruments do you play proficiently?

**Ans:**

The potential hire's answer will further demonstrate their musical skills.

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### Question - 20:

Suppose I love music as well and I am a follower/fan of your video-blog "the Rhythm Tree". Can you tell me when/how "The Rhythm Tree" video-blog was born?

**Ans:**

A couple of years ago, I decided to develop a DVD and music kit for children with special needs. I wanted to build a beautiful site that would feature this product and also educate others on how to use music to help children with special needs. I'm lucky enough to have a very talented brother who is the creative art director and director of design at an amazing ad agency in San Francisco called Hub Strategy. He designed my logo, website and product packaging and helped me in numerous other ways.

Video was always the heart and soul of my music therapy presentations and workshops, so it made sense to use this medium on my website. Starting a video blog was a challenging process, but I'm so glad that I stuck with it. People really need to see music therapy in action to get it. If a picture's worth a thousand words, then a video's worth a million!

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### Question - 21:

Please share three of your success stories as a Music Therapist?

**Ans:**

The applicant will further display their competency in this answer.

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### Question - 22:

Tell me how do you go about involving family members in patient treatment?

**Ans:**

With the patient permission I ask the family for help or inform them of progress.

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### Question - 23:

Explain me a session plan that did not go well. Why was it not successful and what did you learn from it?

**Ans:**

Describe a session plan that did not go well. Why was it not successful and what did you learn from it?



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**Question - 24:**

Tell us is there research being done in the field of music therapy? Where can I learn more?

**Ans:**

Yes! The American Music Therapy Association has put together some excellent fact sheets about the research on Autism, Alzheimer's, William's Syndrome, Special Education, Depression, Mental Illness and much more!

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**Question - 25:**

Tell us how would you end a therapy session with a client with Alzheimer's disease-or a child with autism-who are enjoying themselves and don't want you to leave?

**Ans:**

Many clients who use music therapy have limited verbal communication skills. The applicant needs to show the ability to communicate effectively and empathetically with these clients.

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**Question - 26:**

Tell us how have your professional and educational experiences prepared you to work in this position?

**Ans:**

Nursing has given me many skills which I believe are transferable to this masters. Although it's a different profession, I have gained skills in communicating with people. Not just patients/clients but also with working as part of a team. I have skills in being professional at all times. I understand and have been involved in safeguarding, confidentiality, sensitive situations. Educationally I enjoyed writing my dissertation and achieved an A.

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**Question - 27:**

Explain me what you do with the children?

**Ans:**

I work with them in their own homes once a week. Some of these kids have been abused, some have bipolar disorder, some have schizophrenia, quite a few have ADHD, some are autistic, cerebral palsy - all different kinds.

The approach that I take is very improvisational. For example, a couple weeks ago I went to see one of my clients, he's a 12-year old boy with mental retardation and schizophrenia. I actually see him in his school. This particular day he had had a very frustrating day in school. We started by singing the "hello" song we always sing, in which I kind of ask him how he's doing. He said that he was very upset.

We had a piano in the room so we moved to that. I just provided rhythmic support in my part for his melodic improvisation. He doesn't have any piano background, but he was just expressing himself. Then he asked for my drum - I always have a bag of instruments with me - and he played the drum while I played piano. He was very angry, so he was playing hard, fast, and in erratic rhythms. I supported that style, but slowly brought him away from that by playing a little more calmly and softly than he was. Gradually, his drumming calmed, and became a steady, controlled rhythm. At that point, he began to smile for the first time since I'd arrived.

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**Question - 28:**

Tell us how can a music therapist decide what instruments an autistic child will prefer?

**Ans:**

Music therapists will assess a client's interest in different instruments by introducing them to various instruments and see what they are more drawn to and motivated by. Typically, a music therapist will use piano, voice, guitar and various percussive instruments like tambourines, maracas, drums, cabassas, rhythm sticks, etc.

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**Question - 29:**

Explain do you have a certain structure in improvisations like the one in the video? Do you have, for example, certain sentences or chord progressions ready when you sing?

**Ans:**

I do have certain chords and progressions that I frequently use. I love easy-to-play, open chord shapes that can be played up the neck of the guitar. I like chords that fall easily under my fingers so that I can keep my attention and focus on my client. I will be sharing my method through an on-line, self-study "Guitar Skills for Music Therapists" course that will launch in mid-September on MusicTherapyEd.com. This course is all about using easy chords and shapes up the neck of the guitar in order to create great sounding progressions that break the mold from the I IV V progressions that we all get sucked into. It also gives participants lots of fresh strum and fingerpicking patterns to work with.

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**Question - 30:**

I see you do a lot of research about finding new objects or gestures to enhance the communication skills of your users. How do you develop these techniques/musical instruments adaptation?

**Ans:**

I wish I was the one to develop those techniques! I'm just synthesizing what I have learned from many of the talented therapists that I have been lucky enough to work with. My teachers and mentors have been music therapists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, play therapists, etc. There are so many incredible professionals in the special needs field and connecting with and learning from each other helps enrich all of our work.

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**Question - 31:**

Tell me what have you done in the past year to better yourself as a Music Therapist?

**Ans:**

What have you done in the past year to better yourself as a Music Therapist?

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**Question - 32:**

Tell me what do you do when a patient is reluctant to participate in music therapy sessions?

**Ans:**

What do you do when a patient is reluctant to participate in music therapy sessions?

[View All Answers](#)

**Question - 33:**

Tell us what programming have you implemented that was designed to help the patient in their continued recovery after discharge?

**Ans:**

There isn't much I can do except provide materials for them to continue making music.

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**Question - 34:**

Can you tell me what are your career goals?

**Ans:**

Psychiatry in a hospital.

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**Question - 35:**

So could you sing three of your favorite songs?

**Ans:**

Listen carefully. The candidate needs to convince you of their musical aptitude.

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**Question - 36:**

Explain me how do you play musical instruments, sing, interact with clients, make notes and assess clients simultaneously?

**Ans:**

The answer to this question will illuminate the candidate's multitasking and organizational skills.

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**Question - 37:**

Sharing knowledge is the future. We can grow better and faster, if we help each other. I think The Rhythm Tree is a nice example of this way sharing information. How does it feel to be a "pioneer" of open source in music-therapy?

**Ans:**

I feel honored to be considered a "pioneer," but I'm just humbly following in the footsteps of those who came before me, like Paul Nordoff and Clive Robbins. I feel privileged to have access to the technology to make this information accessible worldwide. One of the coolest things is to get an email from someone in a county like Iran, saying how much they appreciate this info.

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**Question - 38:**

Tell me what is the minimum age for music therapy with a child with an autistic child?

**Ans:**

As soon as the child is diagnosed, music therapy can begin. This can be as young as 2 1/2 years old.

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**Question - 39:**

Tell us what about the nursing home?

**Ans:**

Well, often for older folks that have trouble breathing, we do a lot of singing to help their respiration. We do that a lot especially with pneumonia patients, because it helps keep the infection out of their lungs. If it settles to their lungs, it can kill them.

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**Question - 40:**

Explain me what is Music Therapy?

**Ans:**



Music Therapy is a research based health care profession that uses music to help clients reach their therapeutic goals. These goals are accomplished within a therapeutic relationship by a credentialed professional who has completed either a bachelor's, master's or doctorate degree in music therapy. Let's dig a bit deeper into this definition.

\* "Researched based" points to the fact that empirical research on the effectiveness of music therapy is being done at many universities throughout the world.

\* "Health care profession" means that music therapy is akin to such fields as physical therapy, speech therapy, or occupational therapy.

\* "Uses music to help clients reach their therapeutic goals" means that music therapists are helping clients work on traditional therapeutic goals that might typically be found on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or an Individualized Transition Plan (ITP). For example, a music therapist working with a child with Down syndrome might be addressing a speech therapy goal of improved articulation. The music therapist can use custom written songs that have many of the words or sounds that the child is struggling with. The child then gets to have fun singing the song and practicing that sound or word many times. With music therapy, you can get the repetition without the monotony!

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### Question - 41:

Tell us what type of patient receives musical therapy? Why does that person qualify for therapy?

**Ans:**

There are music therapists working with many different populations. A few examples people with special needs, seniors in nursing homes, people in the hospital setting and individuals recovering from strokes and other brain injuries. If someone has a therapeutic goal, then chances are that they qualify and would benefit from music therapy.

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### Question - 42:

Tell us how old must a child be before she or he can start music therapy?

**Ans:**

A child is ready for music therapy as soon as she or he shows a positive response to music. I once worked with an 8-month-old girl who had global developmental delays and I would play the guitar to encourage her to make sounds. When she started making sounds, I figured out what pitch she was producing, adapted the key I was in to match this pitch and used it in a song. It led to an increase in her vocal development which was one of her therapeutic goals.

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### Question - 43:

Explain how many days does Music Therapy need to be applied for?

**Ans:**

Continuous weekly sessions between 30 and 60 minutes long work well. Most of my clients continue to need therapy so it is not uncommon for me to see a client for years. At a minimum, I would want to see a child once a week for 4 months.

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### Question - 44:

Tell me where do music therapists work?

**Ans:**

Well, many of us work for contracting companies. The company where I am, we have a few main contracts. One is with the nursing home. Another is with the County Board of Mental Retardation Development, and they have a huge caseload of children. We do in-home services for them. We have a few consulting contracts in schools, through which we teach the teachers techniques to help them integrate music into what they are doing. We also have a contract with a clinical psychologist, and we take referrals from his office.

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### Question - 45:

Tell us which type of music is effective for autistic child?

**Ans:**

It all depends on the child. Music therapists will try different styles and tempos of music with a client to assess their preference.

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### Question - 46:

Tell us what goals do you try to accomplish with children via music therapy?

**Ans:**

The traditional goals include speech/communication, gross motor, fine motor, academic, social and behavioural development. Although I focus on these goals, I also use music therapy to build a child's self-esteem, confidence and spirit.

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### Question - 47:

Tell me what made you choose this field? Why?

**Ans:**

After finishing my bachelor's degree in Psychology, I started looking into graduate programs and discovered the field of music therapy. I knew it was the perfect fit since it combined my passion for music, psychology and helping children.

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### Question - 48:





Tell us what do your therapy sessions look like?

**Ans:**

My sessions usually start with a "hello" song. I use this song to connect with my client and work on greetings and other therapeutic goals. I then use specific songs and activities that are tailored to the individual strengths and needs of my client. Although I always go in with a plan, I keep myself open to following my client's lead. This improvisational form of music therapy can open unexpected doors to development and progress. It can also strengthen the therapeutic relationship, which is the foundation of all my work.

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**Question - 49:**

Tell us what music therapy strategies have you used? Which one was most effective?

**Ans:**

What have you done in the past year to better yourself as a Music Therapist?

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**Question - 50:**

Explain me about a successful patient you have either cared for or witnessed being cared for?

**Ans:**

I had a gentleman who I saw for the length of his stay at the hospital. When I first arrived, his GCS was fairly low with little responses made, but music seemed to spark something in him. I continued to see him and also worked with his wife and soon learned a lot about his life. His treatments and conditions at the hospital were touch and go, but his sessions with music created something different and extremely special between himself and his wife, as if they weren't in a hospital room, and were reliving some of their fondest memories through the music. Over time, he eventually got well enough that he was able to be discharged around the same time I was finishing my internship.

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