

MUSIC AND MOVEMENT – A TIME FOR EXPRESION

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Seeking to explore the use of music as a tool for expression and group facilitation, music therapists Moises Espinoza and Paola Esperson worked together with MDSI to hold Music and Movement sessions. Over the course of one week, 5 sessions of a 90 minute duration beginning Monday September 25th to Friday September 29th, various MDSI groups engaged in a series of music and movement activities aimed at discovering and facilitating the expression of each group's musical identity.

Over the course of one week five groups participated in the music and movement sessions. The results and feedback from the groups were extremely positive, all the participants showed enthusiasm and engaged well with the activities. The facilitators Moises and Paola believe in using music as a vehicle to promote social inclusion, personal development and well-being, this theme was present in each group session.

The first session was with the ladies from the Coffee Club, with a group of 18 women from a variety of ages and cultural backgrounds. The group engaged in various activities that let all participants comfortably explore their own expression through music. This session resulted in the Coffee club having their own signature line dance.

In the Aged Care and Dementia session, the music therapists engaged in different activities with the participants that aimed to stimulate positive interactions and facilitate cognitive function. This session explored movement through dancing, with the music chosen by one of the participants, a well-known waltz. The music is integrated with social activity and creates multiple levels of social stimulation. Listening to music and being able to move freely with creative body movement and engagement with different dancing partners created a stimulating and easing environment.

After the success of the session staff members expressed surprise at the response and active engagement of the participants, particularly from one client with advanced onset dementia. This participant showed unprecedented enthusiasm, standing and dancing as he

had never done before according to staff members. Music and art therapy for the aged and dementia clients is a great tool to help maintain or increase their levels of physical, mental, social, and emotional functioning.

The sessions with the Filipino, Disability and Art group were also a success each provided a unique experience for all participants involved. The facilitators engaged with the groups through music to explore the participant's individual identity and how the group's identity is defined by diversity.

"When we are able to express it, we can feel the happiness in our heart, we can express ourselves through music"

Heartfelt feedback from a participant at the end of the Filipino session.

Relating to one another was constantly present, each group engaged to the best of their ability in the aspects of music and movement, through singing, movement and dancing.