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# Music therapy: Innovation during COVID-19

Initiative Type

Model of Care

Status

Deliver

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## Summary

During the onset of COVID-19, the senior music therapist at Gold Coast University Hospital implemented adaptive ways of working with patients, including self-directed activities for those in isolation. Ukulele lessons were introduced to the Gold Coast Mental Health inpatient service at this time with great benefit to patients and staff.

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## Key dates

Aug 2021

Aug 2021

## Implementation sites

Gold Coast University Hospital and Logan Hospital Mental Health Inpatients

## Key Contacts

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## Aim

To reduce isolation, as well as improve wellbeing and self-expression of mental health patients.

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## **Benefits**

The music therapist recorded behaviours that were observed during ukulele lessons including those relating to attention, memory, and self-expression. It became evident that interpersonal communication, focus and empowerment were the most prominent themes that emerged during the ukulele lessons.

## **Background**

Restrictions enforced during the COVID-19 pandemic at Gold Coast Mental Health inpatient facilities would have led to feelings of isolation among the clients. The senior music therapist at Gold Coast Health decided to introduce a new way of working with patients to reduce isolation, improve wellbeing and enhance self-expression.

## **Solutions Implemented**

Ukulele lessons were introduced in the form of individual and group lessons. Patients were encouraged to continue learning the ukulele in their own time. Workbooks were given to those patients interested in developing their skills and displayed high motivation in learning.

## **Evaluation and Results**

Ninety patients were afforded the opportunity to learn the ukulele during music therapy across a six month period. Twenty-five per cent of patients desired to practice further after the lessons by requesting to keep the workbook. Forty per cent of patients were offered the opportunity to borrow the ukulele after the lesson, which indicated high engagement and motivation among the patients.

## **Lessons Learnt**

While objective data was collected by clinicians capturing the nature of intervention and episodes of delivery and perception of patient engagement, it would be beneficial in the future to have a patient feedback form after each session to understand the patient experience.

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## References

Negrete, B. (2021). Ukulele Class in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit: Support for Parents Before and During COVID-19. *Family Matters*, 47(2)

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