

The Application and Significance of Music Therapy in Hospice Care

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Abstract: With the rise of the concept of humanistic medicine, end-of-life care has attracted much attention in recent years in the field of medicine and other fields. In the field of end-of-life care, music therapy also has high value. Music has the functions of cultivating sentiment, relaxing body and mind, and pleasing mood, etc. By using music listening method, song re-composition, improvised music performance and other forms of music therapy, it can effectively improve the quality of life of patients, and help them to face the end of their lives in a more peaceful state of mind. This paper first analyzes the significance of music therapy in hospice care, and then discusses the specific use of music therapy in hospice care to promote the use of music therapy in hospice care and provide reference for relevant personnel.

Keywords: music therapy; hospice care; implications for use

1. Introduction

The end of life is an outcome that people must face, and the dying stage is the final stage of the journey of life. At this stage, some people will accept the outcome calmly, while others will have panic and anxiety due to physical pain and emotional difficulty in parting with their lives. How to enable the dying to gain physical and mental peace and dignity in the final stage is the essential goal of practicing hospice care. In the past, hospice care was mostly focused on relieving physical pain and providing life care, with relatively little attention paid to the spiritual dimension of the dying. In recent years, the concept of humanistic medicine has emerged, and attention has been paid to the psychological and spiritual care of the dying. In this context, music therapy, as a non-pharmacological intervention, has gradually been applied to the field of hospice care. Music therapy, that is, utilizing the functionality of music to establish or help reconstruct a harmonious and beautiful psychology, continuously eliminating unhealthy factors, promoting the ear, eye, mind, body, and highly coordinated, and improving the stress capacity of the mind and spirit [1]. The purpose of this paper is to study the use and significance of music therapy in end-of-life care, which is of great significance in promoting the wide application of music therapy in the field of end-of-life care.

2. Significance of the use of music therapy in hospice care

2.1 Relief of physical pain

The use of music therapy in the hospice care process is beneficial in relieving pain at the physical level for the ill dying person. For many terminally ill people, pain at the physical level is one of the main challenges they face. In the face of such terminally ill people, medications are usually used for intervention, but long-term use of medications may bring side effects or create tolerance, thus failing to achieve the desired results. Music therapy, as a non-pharmacological intervention, can distract the terminally ill and distract them from their physical pain in order to achieve relief. The rhythm and melody of music can affect the body's autonomic nervous system, which serves to lower the heart rate and blood pressure, thus relieving the tension in the dying person's body. Music can also stimulate the brain and help the patient to reduce the feeling of pain. Soothing music can help the dying person relax their muscles and reduce the discomfort caused by physical pain.

2.2 Improvement of emotional state

The terminally ill often face great psychological pressure in the last stage of life, including the fear of death, the regret of unfinished business, and the unwillingness to let go of their loved ones, etc. These negative emotions often lead to anxiety, depression, and even mental collapse of the terminally ill, which seriously affects the final life experience of the terminally ill, and also causes great mental pain to their families. The use of music therapy is conducive to improving the emotional state of the terminally ill. Through its unique emotional expression and resonance, music therapy can help the dying release their inner pressure and improve their mental state. As a non-verbal art form, music can directly touch the depths of human emotions and deepen the emotions of the dying, thus obtaining psychological comfort. Music has a direct influence and inhibitory effect on the central nervous system, which can regulate emotions and achieve analgesic and hypnotic effects [2].

2.3 Promotion of emotional communication

The use of music therapy in hospice care is not only beneficial to the physical and psychological health of the individual, but also promotes emotional communication between the terminally ill and their family members, friends, and healthcare professionals. Loneliness and isolation are psychological problems for many terminally ill people, and music therapy can provide a platform for the terminally ill to interact with others, enabling many of them to feel the care and support of others, thus alleviating the sense of loneliness. Music is an important communication medium that can help the terminally ill and their families express their feelings for each other, convey love and care, and bring psychological comfort to the terminally ill and their families [3].

3. Specific use of music therapy in hospice care

3.1 Providing personalized music listening

Providing personalized music listening for the dying is one of the commonly used means of music therapy in hospice care [4]. Each person approaching the end of life has his or her own psychological needs, musical preferences, and emotional memories; therefore, therapists need to carefully select suitable music repertoire to meet the individualized needs of the dying person according to his or her cultural background, personal experiences, and musical preferences. For example, for the terminally ill who love classical music, classical works by Beethoven or Mozart can be selected for playback, and for the elderly terminally ill who like pop music, music they liked when they were young can be selected for playback, triggering their fond memories and helping them to relax and relieve pain and anxiety. During the process of listening to the music, the music therapist needs to carefully observe the responses of the dying person and adjust the rhythm, volume and style of the music as needed. During music therapy, the therapist can help the dying person to adjust their breathing and relieve the symptoms of physical pain.

3.2 Providing a platform for improvisation

Improvisation is a more interactive and creative use of music therapy. For the terminally ill, improvisation can provide an outlet for the terminally ill to release their emotions, giving them the opportunity to do so. However, there are limitations to this approach, and it is not suitable for those who are physically weak. The dying person can hum a melody to convey their love and reluctance for their loved ones, and tap to release their inner anger or anxiety, helping the dying person to vent their emotions. In the last stage of life, many dying people will feel helpless and very reluctant to let go of their family members. The therapist can record and save the tunes made by the dying person through random tapping and humming, and give them to the family members for remembrance.

3.3 Guiding the dying to remember the past

Music resonates with human emotions, and by listening to it, the therapist can guide the dying person to remember the past, the Reminiscing about important moments and emotional experiences in life distracts the dying person. During this process, the therapist can gather the family and friends of the dying person together to reminisce with the dying person about the good things of the past. The therapist can guide the dying person to recall their growth, love, family and career experiences by playing music related to the dying person's life stage. For example, for an elderly dying person, he/she can play his/her wedding music and invite his/her partner to reminisce with the dying person about his/her wonderful marital life; for a dying person who loves to dance, he/she can play his/her favorite dance melody to evoke his/her wonderful dance experience. In the process of musical reminiscence, the therapist needs to encourage the dying to share their stories and feelings, and encourage family members to share their stories and feelings, so as to create a warm atmosphere of reminiscence. Such a musical reminiscence process can not only relieve the psychological pressure of the dying person, but also help to promote emotional communication between the patient and his family.

4. Conclusion

Music therapy is an effective way of end-of-life care, which is conducive to helping the terminally ill to relieve physical pain, ease their emotional stress, and promote emotional communication with their families and friends. The specific use of music therapy in end-of-life care takes various forms, and therapists can provide personalized music listening for the terminally ill, provide a musical platform for improvisation, guide the terminally ill to recall the past through music, and promote emotional communication between the terminally ill and their families. Through music therapy, the dying person can pass through the last stage of life smoothly and obtain peace and dignity.

References

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