

How to create therapeutic playlists

Resources to support your practice development.

Developing therapeutic musicality

A primary foundation for a therapist to work with music therapeutically is the development of therapeutic musicality.

Musicality refers to the innate and cultivated capacities to perceive, imagine, and produce musical properties, and to perceive and attribute meaning to these properties. Therapeutic musicality refers to the utilisation of your musicality in service of your therapeutic practice philosophy.



List of content

In this context, this document offers four different experiential practices.

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Take note that these exercises

- 1. are ideally done interactively with fellow students*
- 2. form part of a larger unified sequence of practices.*

New worlds of learnings

This new content is the result of a new structuring of my research and ideas on therapeutic music into new formats.

The first public expression of this took shape in the first version of the live course, Foundations of Therapeutic Music.

By the time two cohorts had completed it, in April 2026, the demand had outgrown my expectations. Students wanted more: deeper materials, further programmes, ways to keep going.

This is the result.



A development ecosystem for those working with music in therapeutic contexts

What is emerging is an interconnected bundle of materials, recordings, tools and frameworks - all focused entirely on the topic of **therapeutic music**.

The animal still needs a name, and no one knows what exactly it will grow into. Yet what is certain is that we are welcoming new people to join the 2nd iteration of the Foundations course, starting on 16 September.

This coincides with the start of a continuous working group for all students who completed the Foundations course, and the launch of an online collective in Summer 2026.

In other words, stay tuned!



Do you find this work helpful?

One way to support it is by sharing it with others.

Therefore, if something here resonates with you, please consider sharing it with friends, colleagues, professional networks, therapeutic communities, or online groups that may benefit from it too.

A simple share, repost, recommendation, or mentioning can genuinely help this work reach more people.

You can also follow me on

[Substack](#)

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Thank you!

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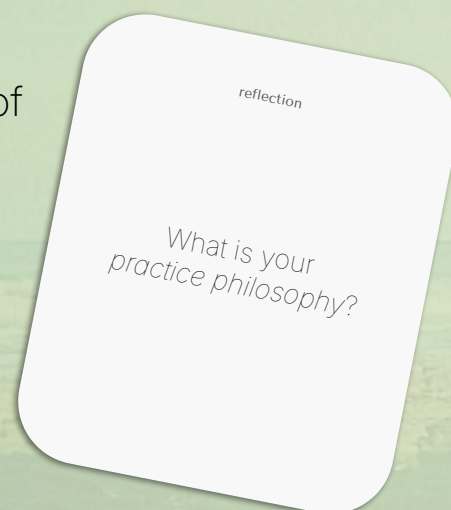
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Your Practice Philosophy

This lecture series highlights the importance of understanding your 'practice philosophy

For those working therapeutically, your views around therapeutic music (i.e. your practice philosophy) significantly impacts the ways music is experienced by clients, and the degree to which it's therapeutic effects can be accessed.

Whether verbalised or left unspoken,
Whether conscious or not.



Your Practice Philosophy

This following reflection prompts are intended to offer you guidance within this process.

For therapists this is meant to support the critical moment you introduce music to clients. For creatives it can help clarify and motivate new directions in the creative process.

For anyone, this is part of a wider series of exercises that gradually help you elucidate where your connection with music comes from, where it stands right now are, and where it can move.

Answer the "Why's?"

How do I view music?

Why do I play music?

How do I understand music's therapeutic dimensions?

1. How do I view music?

What music fundamentally is in this context

Write a core statement of roughly 1–3 sentences describing how you define music, and what music means in the context of your practice.

Example prompts:

I see music primarily as...

For me, music is not just ... but...

Music can express or reveal...

Music has the power to...

At its deepest, fundamental level, music is...



2. Why do I use music?

What music fundamentally can do in this context

Write a core statement of roughly 3–5 sentences describing why music is used by you in your practice.

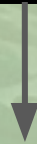
Example prompts:

Music can...

In this work, music allows...

The most important functions of music are...

The reasons why we use music...



3. How we relate to music

How we connect with music

Write a core statement of roughly 3–5 sentences describing how music is used in your practice and how we listen, approach and experience the music.

For therapists, this is an opportunity to provide psychoeducation and suggestions on how to approach to certain experiences/scenarios in therapy sessions.

Example prompts:

Our relationship with music is...

We play music when ...

When experiencing music, people...

Music invites...

Music becomes meaningful when...



4. Anything else?

Any other elements important to incorporate that we have not covered yet

Reflecting on your own unique relationship to music and ways of working with music in your practice, is there anything that has not been said yet?

Is there anything you wish to add that would reflect your approach more completely?
If so, describe this in one final statement of roughly 1–5 sentences.



These reflections live within course module 8 "Creating climates". You can explore the content of all course modules [here](#).

Re-membering your musical self

Each card in this game presents a unique prompt.

Each invites you into a new field of reflections on your autobiography with music and musicality.

Each prompt is intended to help you remember and progressively reveal in greater detail how your own unique early life experiences with sound and music continue to live and evolve inside of you.



Remembering
The Musical Self

Reflection Cards

A few picks

Nature

When you imagine returning to the nature environments from your childhood, what sounds call you back first?

Why?

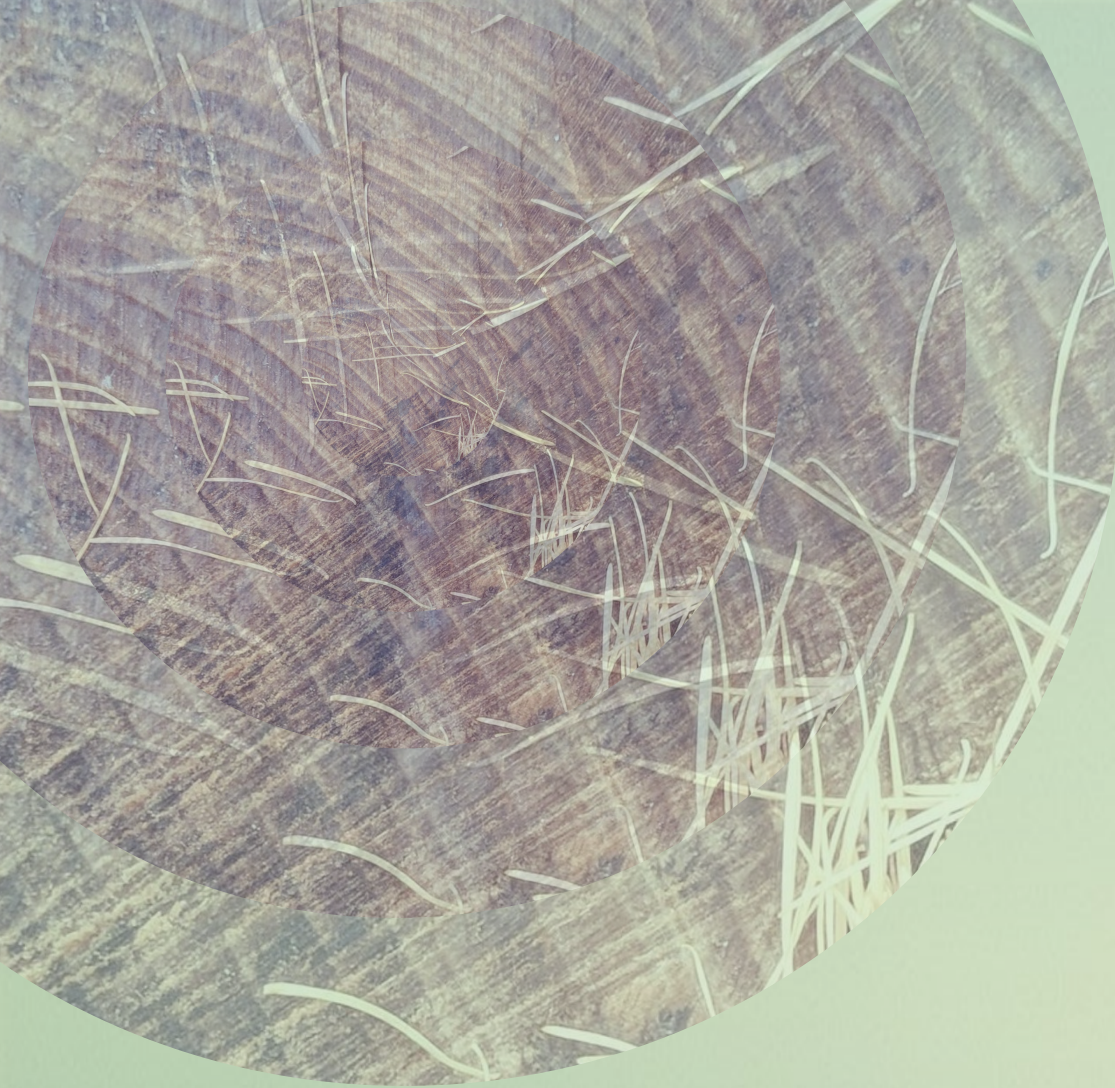
Family

Did anyone in your family expressed strong value judgements about certain types of music?

What kind of music? And how did this impact you?

Identity

What sounds or music allowed you to daydream freely during your teen years?



Mapping the Musical Self (Part II)

This experiment continues the inquiries begun in "Mapping the musical self (Part I)". Here, rather than linking musical preferences to developmental stages, the focus shifts to your present life context.

The central invitation is to explore what therapeutic functions music may serve for you right now, and for you to become more aware of the kinds of music you instinctively gravitate toward to support these needs.

For therapists: this practice will converge into a tool that can be used with clients to come closer to their musical life, to meet their musical self.

This is an excerpt of one part of a 6-part experiment. [Here](#) you can explore how this lives within the wider course context.

A | Do you ever play music to regulate or soothe yourself?

For example to calm anxiety or reduce stress.

How often do you do this?

Score between 1-10 (1 = Very Rarely, 10 = Very Often)

Select 1-3 songs you would select to experience this.
When you scored 3 or higher

B | Do you ever play music to intensify and express emotions more fully?

For example to cry, celebrate or vent our anger

How often do you do this?

Score between 1-10 (1 = Very Rarely, 10 = Very Often)

Select 1-3 songs you would select to experience this.
When you scored 3 or higher

C | Do you ever play music to experience your self-identity?

For example to remember your past, imagine your future, feel like "me"

How often do you do this?

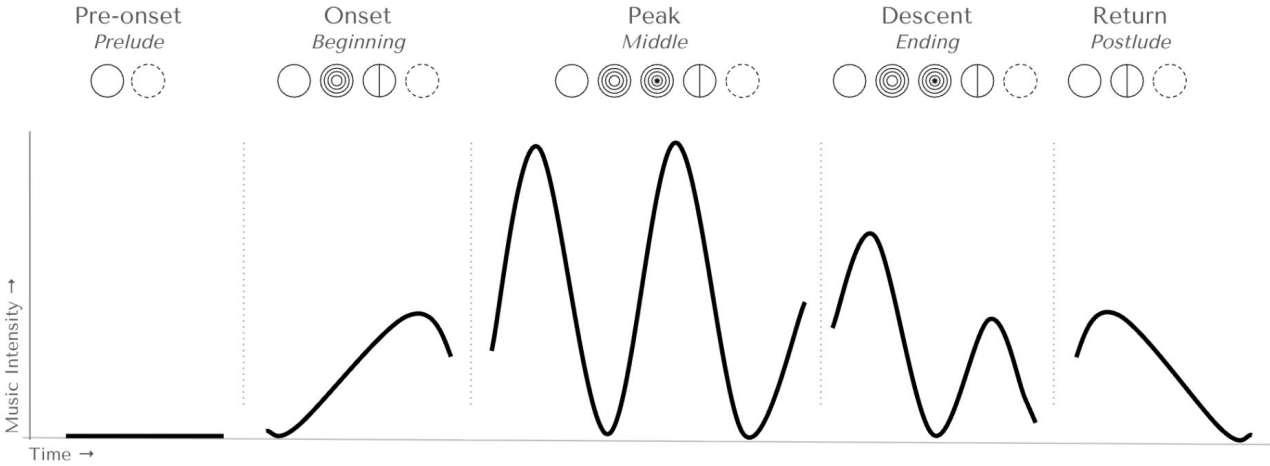
Score between 1-10 (1 = Very Rarely, 10 = Very Often)

Select 1-3 songs you would select to experience this.
When you scored 3 or higher

Playlist Design Tools

Below you'll find some of the maps that support playlist design.

	Pre-onset <i>Prelude</i>	Onset <i>Beginning</i>	Peak <i>Middle</i>	Descent <i>Ending</i>	Return <i>Postlude</i>
Drug intensity	Before anything felt	When first noticed	When strongest	When decline starts	When (almost) gone
Ritual structure	Call Readiness	Initiation Departure	Challenge Transformation	Reconciliation Integration	Renewal Return
Self-Dynamics	Trust ↔ Mistrust	Agency ↔ Inhibition	Generativity ↔ Stagnation	Integration ↔ Fragmentation	Wholeness ↔ Despair
Processes	Meeting, Holding, Settling, Supporting, ...	Carrying, Departing, Crossing, Entering, ...	Opening, Resolving, Releasing, Expanding, ...	Converging, Decelerating, Resolving Merging, ..	Returning, Settling, Meeting, Leading, ...
Music Intensity	Low	Low-Medium	Low-Highest	Low-High	Low-Medium
Music Functions	1. Soothing 2. Deepening 3. Resolving 4. Bridging 5. Containing	1. Soothing 2. Deepening 3. Resolving 4. Bridging 5. Containing	1. Soothing 2. Deepening 3. Resolving 4. Bridging 5. Containing	1. Soothing 2. Deepening 3. Resolving 4. Bridging 5. Containing	1. Soothing 2. Deepening 3. Resolving 4. Bridging 5. Containing



Continue this work

The exercises in this e-book are fragments of something larger. Each one is drawn from a longer sequence of practices that run throughout the Foundations of Therapeutic Music course.

If they opened up questions you'd like to keep exploring, the live course is where the full sequence unfolds: the complete frameworks, the integration of your learnings into your practice, and the experience of doing this work alongside a close community.

Over nine months, you'll develop your therapeutic musicality, deepen your ways of listening, and grow the confidence to meet the unique needs of each client and moment.

Foundations of Therapeutic Music

9-months online group training

2.5 hours every 2 weeks

Starting 16 September 2026

Learn more [here](#).

A new way of thinking

"I struggled with questions around music personalisation for a while, both in my group sessions and with individuals. This course has given me new approaches, and a very new way of thinking about music. Now I am witnessing the musicality inside both myself and my clients better, and am responding more strategically and creatively."

Hannah

(Group Facilitator, Breathwork Practitioner and DJ)