



A Hospital-based Service and Educational Program

What Harp Therapy Is

Playing harp at the bedside is a form of harp therapy, a general term used to describe the continuum of types of therapies in which the harp is used. Taking harp lessons is at the active end while experiencing the gentle sounds of the harp is on the passive end of that continuum. Harp therapy, as an integrative therapy, is a newly emerging field. Throughout the hospital, our harp therapists offer recipients comfort, release of emotions and relaxation, wherever that recipient may be—in a chair, in bed, on a gurney, in a room, a hallway or a waiting area. The recipient need do nothing but rest into the gentle sounds of the little therapy harp. To experience this is to understand why so many people love it and so easily relax into it.

Taking harp lessons has its own benefits. Some students of harp play to ease their own pain; some to overcome physical, mental and emotional challenges; some to feel empowered; some to connect with a community; and some for their own relaxation and well being.

The harp has been used as an instrument of healing for centuries. When the affairs of state became too burdensome for King Saul, the Bible reports that he sought soothing and comforting from the most famous of harp-healers, David. We find mention of the harp often in the ancient Greek tradition, where it is stated in at least one source that “the harp was invented to heal the wounds of the body and soothe the soul.” In the 15th century, harp music was enjoyed by kings and queens in England and Scotland where it was thought that a royal palace “was incomplete without a harp.” All these centuries later the harp is once again being viewed as the ideal instrument to soothe the young and old, ease the pain of the suffering, lower levels of patient anxiety and stress, and usher the dying to the Other side.

Only now are we beginning to explore the specific effects of harp music on the human body. We don’t yet know what it is, but we do know that there is something about the unique timbre of the instrument that promotes a sense of relaxation and well-being in the recipient of harp music as well as in the player. A number of research projects are

underway to study the science of why everyone who plays and/or receives harp music feels so much the better for the experience of it.

Harp therapy in all of its forms is now beginning to be used in many ways to improve the health and well-being of recipients.

- For people in intensive care units and in operating rooms, monitors show that the heart rate decreases and the oxygenation levels increase when soothing harp music is played, in part because harp music provides sound or focus other than the humming and beeping of hospital machines.ⁱ
- When music was played for patients who underwent a bone-marrow transplant, those patients reported lower levels of pain and nausea. It was thought as well, that when music is played in this setting, it may even play a role in quickening the pace at which patients’ new marrow starts producing blood cells, according to a pilot study to be published in 2004 in *Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine*.ⁱⁱ
- Even when patients are simply listening to music, while seated, lying in bed or on a gurney, measurable benefits can take place. A study in Pennsylvania indicates that 30 minutes of music can result in a 20 percent increase in IgA—a hormone that boosts the immune system. The effect of music is similar to the effect of 20 mg of valium in terms of relaxation.ⁱⁱⁱ
- In a study of the effects of harp music in vascular and thoracic surgical patients, subjects experienced decreased pain and anxiety with the harp intervention, and slight reduction in physiologic variable values.^{iv}
- In cancer centers, live harp music has been shown to decrease stress and anxiety levels and relax patients as they receive chemotherapy treatments.^v

- A preliminary study conducted by BEDSIDE HARP among its adult students in its Instructional Harp programs in 2002 and 2003, indicates that the experience of taking up the harp as an adult positively impacts students' physical, emotional and spiritual well-being. The results showed improvements after playing the harp for all the students on all the measures surveyed. The greatest improvements occurred in their feelings of connectedness, their sense of peace and their general feelings of well-being.^{vi}

Bedside Harp™ at Your Hospital

We launch our program at all host hospitals in three phases:

Phase I: Bedside Harp™ for your Patients, Visitors and Staff

This phase involves a professional harp therapist playing harp throughout the hospital on a regular basis, giving patients, staff and family members the opportunity to experience the sounds and presence of the harp. A number of hours per month is included in our contract with you. This phase begins immediately upon entering into a contract with us and will continue throughout.

Phase II BEDSIDE HARP™ Instructional Harp Programs

We have found that when people experience the beautiful sounds of the harp, they begin to ask questions about learning to play themselves. Within 60 days from the launching of Phase I, we would ask your hospital to host an Open House to introduce your staff and your community to our programs of study. Once a class of 4 students can be formed, we begin this second phase and offer Beginning Harp Instructional classes. It has been our experience that classes can be formed within 10 days of the Open House.

Phase III The BEDSIDE HARP® Certification Program

Designed to train and certify intermediate level harpists to play in a variety of medical environments, this program is presently being

offered 3 semesters per year at different locations. After 42 hours of classroom training, interns begin their practica, consisting of 100 hours of playing harp at the bedside for each of two levels of certification. Bedside Harp™-interns who complete 80% or more of their internships at one of our host hospitals receive a certification which will be co-awarded by Bedside Harp™ and the host hospital.

What your Hospital will receive:

Many non-billable hours of harp therapy: Students in the Beginner and Intermediate levels of Instructional Harp play 1 hour per semester in common areas, such as the lobby, at the elevators, waiting rooms, etc. of the host facility. Additionally, there are two levels of Certification: the Hospital-Certified Harp Therapist Level I, requiring an internship of 100 hours and the Hospital-Certified Mastery of Harp Therapy level, requiring an additional 100 hour internship, or a total of 200 hours. These students will begin playing in common areas of your hospital and will then travel to patient rooms once they are deemed capable of doing this.

Increased Patient Satisfaction: A day in the hospital can be stressful, frightening, even boring. Enter one of our harp therapists and the mood changes immediately. We play in all areas of the hospital including ICU, the Emergency Room, the Recovery Room, NICU—wherever there are patients, visitors or staff, you'll find us soothing someone with the gentle strings of our harp.

Community Outreach: Our Instructional harp classes draw people from far and wide to our host hospitals. There's something about a harp that makes it highly appealing to people from 8 to 80.

Our Students

Students, coming from the immediate community and beyond and the hospital, are drawn to our programs for two primary reasons:

1. To learn to play an instrument that sounds and looks beautiful from a highly qualified teacher in the convenient location of your hospital;

2. To earn the credential of an integrative therapy certification at your medical facility.

Our Instructional students are likely to come from a number of sectors:

From your medical facility, including your staff, volunteers, patients, patient families.

From your local community, including residents, college and university students and staff, business workers.

From the harp community.

While the two groups listed above will probably be local, this group is likely to come from areas somewhat beyond your hospital. We have had Instructional students traveling 4 and even more hours to take lessons at one of our host hospitals!

From sectors not yet identified.

We forecast our **Instructional** harp market segments as follows:

Market Segment	% of Total Student Pool
Students from host medical facility	35%
Students from the community	55%
Students from the harp community	5%
Students from other sectors, not yet identified	5%

We believe that students will fall into one or more of these categories:

The non-musician who has a passion to play the harp;

The former music student who would like to return to music and is fascinated with the harp;

The musician who plays an instrument other than harp;

The harpist who would like the certification credential.

The harpist who would like to increase his/her knowledge of playing by ear and without music.

We forecast our **Certification** harp market segments as follows:

Market Segment	% of Total Student Pool
Students from host medical facility	10%
Students from the community	5%
Students from the harp community	75%
Students from other sectors, not yet identified	10%

ⁱ Mucci, Kate. 2000. "The healing sound of music," Holistic Healing. www.about.com.
ⁱⁱ Rickey, Tom. 2003. "Music therapy strikes a chord with cancer patients," press release. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Medical Center, 29 July.
ⁱⁱⁱ Brannaf and Carl Charnels. 1996. "Information about research and study on easy listening music." Wilkes University. www.harplandmusic.com.
^{iv} Aragon, Daleen, Carla Farris, and Jacqueline F. Byers. 2002. "The effects of harp music in vascular and thoracic surgical patients," *Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine* 8(5): 52.
^v Miller, Mary Shaw. 2003. "The science behind the art," *Nursing Spectrum*, 19 May.
^{vi} Bedside Harp. 2004. "Taking up the harp as an adult sweetens life, study shows," *The Bedside Harp Report* 1(1): 1.

We thought you might like to read a sampling of the wonderful comments we've received recently:

The family member of a patient at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital at Rahway:

I am writing to you today to let you know how memorable and moving an experience it was to have you with us during such a difficult time. . . . I will never forget the beautiful music, the prayers, and the feeling of peace I felt that day, thanks to your efforts. I will always remember

how lucky my grandmother was to have you there. . .you really made a difference in our lives.

From the notes of a **BEDSIDE HARP™** intern at The Valley Hospital in Ridgewood, NJ

While playing outside the Diagnostic Imaging Center, the manager came to me and said, “This is wonderful. We need this. Can you come by at 1PM? That’s our busiest time. There’s nothing to do for the people who are waiting.” She was very excited about it—very appreciative.

A nurse from Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, New Brunswick, NJ

Can you follow me around all day? I could sure use those soothing sounds.

From the notes of a **BEDSIDE HARP™** intern at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton, Hamilton, NJ

A patient said, “I had some sad news today. You’ve made my day!”

A **BEDSIDE HARP™** Instructional Student at Bucks County Community College, Newtown, PA

I find myself drawn to my harp in a way that my meditation has called to me. My practice brings me peace, focus and expression. When I sit down to play, when I anticipate coming to class, when I think about going to harp circle, my heart smiles, settles and takes a long, slow, deep breath. My harp has become, as I have discovered, a way of coming back to myself. My eagerness to join the Certification program is tempered by my certain, internal knowledge that I must heal myself first from the events of the past years that all touched my soul. But I look forward, with much, much anticipation, to moving onto that part of this process when I am strong enough to reach out with my own quiet heart to others who are struggling.



From the notes of a **BEDSIDE HARP™** intern at The Valley Hospital in Ridgewood, NJ

I just played for about 10 minutes in a room. The woman in Bed 1 was in very poor condition. Her middle-aged son was holding her hand. Every tune that I played made him cry. I played, “Amazing Grace” and he didn’t know the words. I told him the title. He said, “Oh, that’s my mother’s name.” He was very appreciative.

From the notes of a **BEDSIDE HARP™** intern at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Rahway

The patient is a boy approximately 12 years old. His mother heard me playing in the hall and asked if I would come in the room to play for her son. He was starting chemotherapy the next day. The patient closed his eyes and moved his head back and forth (in response to the music) while I was playing. He clapped when I finished. Really seemed to enjoy the music.