Dignity Through Music: Community Music Groups for Older Adults

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A Little Warmup!

- A noisy noise annoys an oyster.
- Eleven benevolent elephants.
- Chester Cheetah chews a chunk of cheep cheddar cheese.
About your presenter

- Sign up on the clipboard for more info
- New book coming out November 2022 - sign up for more info
Learning objectives

- Participants will identify three potential benefits for people with medical diagnoses such as Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s from participating in community music groups.
- Participants will identify three potential benefits for care partners from participating in community music groups.
- Participants will describe two ways in which community music groups help participants tell their story to the wider community.
Alzheimer’s Jam Session

- Meets on the third Thursday from 2:30-3:30 at the Central Resource Library in Overland Park, KS
- Led by the Alzheimer’s Jam Band
- Designed for low-pressure, in-the-moment engagement in the music
- No pre-planned program
- Caregivers welcome
- Participants can bring their own instruments or use provided rhythm instruments
- Participants can sing, listen, or make song requests
Parkinson’s Choir

- Sponsored by Parkinson’s Foundation and Westchester Village
- Meets on Tuesdays from 10:45-11:45 at the Lenexa Senior Center and via Zoom
- In its third year
- Structured rehearsals: body and vocal warmups, song practice, cool downs (and kazoos!)
- Participants access practice videos on YouTube
- Designed to help with maintaining vocal function and good posture
- Caregivers welcome
- Participants help with selecting repertoire and instrumentation
- Performances
  - Live concert
  - Video watch party
“Early Morning Rain”

- Was part of the Parkinson’s Disease Singing Festival in Iowa in 2022
- Video link
Giving Voice Chorus

- Based in the Twin Cities
- People living with dementia, caregivers, and volunteers
- Sing familiar songs and new ones, too, in three-part harmony
- Volunteers help provide “a welcoming, dementia-friendly environment”
- Weekly rehearsals and a performance at the end of each session
- Participants get a binder full of music and practice CDs
Benefits of Participation

- Joy of making music
- Doing something that’s not disease-oriented (but where the disease is still understood)
- Building relationships with peers
- Getting to tell their story
  - To others who understand
  - To the wider community
- Parkinson’s choir: maintaining vocal function, maintaining posture
- Alzheimer’s jam: accessing long-term memories, experiencing focus and cognitive organization
Benefits for the Caregivers

- Respite
- Building relationships with other caregivers
- Seeing their care partner from a different angle (role shifting?)
Telling their story

- Get to show their families, friends, and the wider community that they are LIVING with their diagnosis
From Stuart Munro, M.D.

I have been a member of the Parkinson’s choir for a year and a half now. In fact, tonight will be my third family concert. I would like to thank the Parkinson’s Foundation for their generous support over the years of the existence of the choir.

I would simply like to say that I have observed how much the choir means to many of us. Today, for example, when Anastasia announced that we had been granted another year of support there was a spontaneous display of enthusiasm from the members. I believe it was Joanne who spoke for the rest of us when she said that it is the best part of each week.

It may seem like a small thing, but it is very large gift to us Parkies. I hope it can continue for many years to come...

Sincerely,

Stuart Munro
Telling their story

- Get to show their families, friends, and the wider community that they are LIVING with their diagnosis
- “Parky Pride” song and testimonials
Potential barriers to community music groups

- Covid-19 pandemic
- Transportation
- Finding an appropriate space for jam sessions/rehearsals/performances
- Financial considerations
- Challenges in spreading the word
Contact Info and More Resources

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