

Guide notes for talks to dementia cafes or groups with people with a dementia diagnosis

Part. 1 Introduction to Playlist for Life and playlists

- My name is XX and I'm a Volunteer for Playlist for Life, a music and dementia charity
- We encourage everyone to make a playlist of the music that is important to them.
- Your 'playlist for life' is all the songs and tunes that make up the soundtrack of your life, collected together in one place.
- Think about music that gives you 'that flashback-feeling'. These are the tunes that, when you hear them, you instantly recognise them and they make you think of a person, or a place, or a special moment.
- We call this **personally meaningful music** because it is special to you and is a part of who you are.
- Have you ever listened to Radio 4's Desert Island Discs? Imagine you were invited on to be a guest. What tunes would you choose to describe who you are? Or, if your life was made into a film, what songs would be on the soundtrack?
- There are many benefits to listening to music, especially the music that is important to **you**. Scientists have found that listening to music makes your brain light up like a fireworks display. This is because music is special and it stimulates lots of different parts of the brain at once.
- Think about what happens when you hear music. The first thing the music does is enter your ear, then it takes a trip around the brain. First of all it visits the emotional part – it makes you feel happy or sad or nostalgic, then it visits the bit of your brain that makes you tap your feet, clap your hands, or want to get up and dance, then it stops off at the bit of your brain that knows all the words and wants to sing, and at the same time as all of this is going on, the music is activating the part of your brain that stores your memories.
- ***Give an example of a song from your playlist.***
- We encourage **everyone** to make their playlist straight away, but the big aim of our charity is that every person living with dementia has access to **their** unique playlist because music has so many special benefits.
- If someone has a dementia their playlist can be really helpful. It can be used as the soundtrack to their day to make them feel better. If you're feeling a bit out of sorts, music can make you feel more like yourself again. For example, if someone doesn't like getting up in the mornings, listening to music from their playlist that helps them wake up in a good mood might help them feel ready to get up and start the day.

- Or if they want to relax, they can listen to music from their playlist that makes them feel more calm.
- Listening to personally meaningful music in this way can reduce the need for medication that is often prescribed to manage mood and anxiety.
- Listening to songs from their playlist is also a lovely way to spend time with loved ones and friends.
- ***Give them an example of two songs from your playlist – one that makes you feel energised, and one that makes you feel calm.***
- Q&A
- *Can you think of a song that you would like to wake up to, something that makes you feel energised?*
- *Can you think of a song that helps you to feel relaxed?*

Part 2. How to start making a personal playlist

- Here are some tips on how to get started
- We'll focus on making a playlist for yourself, but you can of course apply this to making a playlist for someone else.
- Get started by thinking of a song that makes you smile.
- Why does it make you smile. Is it the rhythm or the lyrics?
- Or does it bring back a memory of a time, a person or a place?
- If you just know a few lines of the song try typing them into Google to come up with the song title and artist.
- Put that tune on your playlist and write down the story/memory attached.
- Repeat the process!
- You can use our Personalised Music Journal to keep a record of all the songs and memories. There are also questions on a handy wallchart in the middle of our Get Started leaflets that could help you find meaningful tunes.
- You can also think about...

Lullabies your parents or grandparents sang

Schoolyard songs

Football tunes

Religious music and songs

TV themes

The music of a first kiss or sweetheart

Concerts
Movie music
Advert jingles
Tunes teenage children played endlessly in their bedroom

TOP TIP! Music stirs powerful emotions. Keep an eye out for Red Flag songs that trigger unpleasant or unwanted feelings or memories, so you know to keep them off the playlist. Find out more at the **Use Music Safely** page on our website <https://www.playlistforlife.org.uk/use-music-safely>

- Open up your leaflet and take a look at the wallchart there which has questions that might help jog your memory.
- We have lots of tools and advice for making playlists and finding the right music, including tips for making a playlist for someone who can't tell you what music they like. You also might want to think about what equipment is best for the person to listen to their music (see Choosing Your Equipment doc.). I'd be very happy to chat you about these.
- You can also go to the Playlist for Life website – the address is on your leaflet

Part 3 – One-to-one chats

- Offer to go round and speak to people individually or in small groups
- Introduce yourself & have a chat

Ask their names

Ask them where they grew up

Ask them what music they like.

Ask them if they are part of any group where their personal playlist could be used – e.g. choir

You could suggest big artists from certain decades to get the conversation going (see lists below), or maybe they were more into folk or jazz, classical or blues music.

1940s: Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, Glen Miller, Benny Goodman, Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday, Louis Armstrong, Roy Rogers, Hank Williams, The Andrews Sisters,

1950s: Elvis, Chuck Berry, Doris Day, Pat Boone, Bobbie Darin, Connie Francis, Nat King Cole, Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Peggy Lee, Perry Como, Patsy Cline, Jim Reeves

1960s: The Beatles, The Beach Boys, Aretha Franklin, The Supremes, The Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan, Sam Cooke, Matt Munro, Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder, Led Zeppelin, Martha and The Vandellas, The Mamas and Papas

1970s: Stevie Wonder, Elton John, Pink Floyd, Led Zeppelin, The Eagles, The Rolling Stones, Queen, James Brown, The Who, David Bowie, The Isley Brothers, Bee Gees

1980s: Michael Jackson, Prince, Madonna, U2, Bruce Springsteen, Run-D.M.C., Van Halen, Billy Joel, The Police, Guns 'n' Roses, Wham!, Whitney Huston, Dire Straits, AC/DC, Lionel Ritchie, Genesis

- You can show/tell them about:

- leaflet and wallchart
- Personalised Music Journal.
- 100 Years Book and our Spotify page with all the playlists
<https://open.spotify.com/user/playlistdementia>
- BBC Music Memories website <https://musicmemories.bbcrewind.co.uk/> - the Theme Tune section is a good place to start! It also has a good classical music section as well as the popular music sections listed by decade

If you are making a playlist for someone who can't tell you what music they like...

- If you are making a playlist for someone who can't tell you what music they like, or they have said 'I'm not very into music'...don't give up!
- You need some more Music Detective skills.
- You need to look for clues in what you know about them and think of tunes that might make them respond.
- Then play or sing those tunes to them. Do they react?
- If so, put the tune on their song list.
- Perhaps the music will remind them of a story. You can write that down too.
- If you don't know where to start ask their family and friends.
- Also look at the Memory Bump, think of Inheritance Tracks and Identity Tracks
- Remember, even if you only come up with a handful of songs, you have started their playlist and this is a great achievement! You can ask family and friends to suggest more music for the person.

Age 10-30: The Memory Bump

Psychologists have proven that we create more memories between the ages of 10 and 30 than at any other time in our lives. Try tunes from this period in your life.

Inheritance Tracks

Our playlists include tunes we inherit from other people. Who have been the important people in your life? When were their Memory Bumps? Did your parents sing you to sleep? What bands did your children like? What songs take you back to a sweetheart?

Identity Tracks

Tunes can be associated with aspects of our deepest identity. Where you and your family are from shapes the music you grow up hearing - every Glaswegian knows the lullaby **Ally Bally**. Religion and faith songs may be important. Or perhaps there is music related to 'the tribes' we belong to - football teams, political parties, mods and rockers. Within the LGBT community music has played an important part for many years.

