

# Why music matters

**We're all affected by music and have an innate ability to respond to it. We have our own individual taste in music and that helps us form our identity and personality.**

Music is all around us. We hear music on the TV, football matches, festivals, religious events, shopping centres, adverts and birthdays.

The list is endless, it is constantly on in the background of our lives.

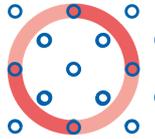


Music is everywhere, often when you have no idea it is happening footsteps, breathing, speaking, bird song, car horns and the radio are just a few examples. and we all have a unique sound that defines who we are – there is no such thing as a person who ‘can’t sing’ (contrary to what many have been told in school).

## Our innate sense of music

Child developmentalists have found that we’re all affected by music and have an innate ability to respond to it, whether we realise it or not. From the very early weeks in the womb, we all hear a heartbeat and therefore learn to recognise rhythm before we are even born.

Hearing is the very first sense we acquire, so we hear voices and music in the womb also. Interestingly, hearing is also one of the last senses to leave us before we die. Music psychologists tell us that our innate response to music may be displayed in different ways – these responses may be shown as a physical, emotional, cognitive, spiritual and social response.



## Understanding our responses to music

### Physical Response

When our bodies respond to music spontaneously. Music motivates us to move. This is best described when a child starts to dance when they hear music, why gyms play upbeat music at a faster tempo, when we find ourselves tapping in time with the music with our feet even when we don't even consciously try to do it.

### Emotional Response

This is best described when you may feel a tingle down your spine when you hear a piece of music, when you may be moved to tears or laughter as you listen to a song.

### Cognitive Response

Neuroscientists believe that when we listen to music, the whole brain is stimulated, even parts of the brain that may be affected by injury or impairment. This is why people who may have a stammer, are able to sing with flow, when an individual with dementia may be able to sing and remember all of the words to a song or how music can bring back memories from times gone by.

### Spiritual Response

Every world religion uses music in some way to help us pray, find God or find peace.

### Social Response

Music is played in orchestras, duets, bands, groups, choirs, etc. Music brings people together and is very much a social act.

Written by Ray Travasso and Anita Thomas

Ray Travasso is a qualified Music Therapist and Director of Suffolk Music therapy Services. Anita Thomas is a Senior Music Therapist and Supervisor at Suffolk Music Therapy Services.

ray@suffolkmusictherapyservices.co.uk  
<http://www.suffolkmusictherapyservices.co.uk>

