

### **Music Therapy Support for Stress and Anxiety, a Case Study:**

The following case study gives a brief picture as to how Guided Imagery and Music (GIM) Therapy has helped an individual in a difficult situation. The patient has given her permission for the recorded case details to be published here.

The Method Followed:

A carefully selected program of music is played that is designed to help elicit feelings, reflections, body sensations or images. The music usually lasts around 30 to 40 minutes during which time the therapist will check in with client to see what is happening and take a log of any reported experiences. The therapist and the client discuss the experience before closing.

### **The Case:**

Ritu, a 40 year old single parent from Kolkata, India, who lives alone with her disabled teenaged son, had nine sessions of GIM to help him gain relief from severe anxiety and panic attacks. At the time of starting therapy she was not working and had very limited support networks. Her father had died several years ago and Ritu had suffered most of her life with high levels of anxiety and severe panic attacks. She was taking a prescription of Prozac from her physician.

Ritu had a total of nine GIM sessions over a period of six months. Through the therapy process, Ritu was able to look at some of her past experiences that she had not had the opportunity to support network to process at the time. She explored ending of a frightening work relationship where she feared that she may be assaulted, she remembered the chaos and confusion of moving home and schools when she was a teenager. Ritu grieved the sadness of an old love relationship and realized that she must move on, holding onto the hope that this relationship was going to work was actually holding her back from making the most of her life now and finally Ritu also grieved the loss of her father and reaffirmed a spiritual connection with him as a part of her final session.

After the Guided Imagery and Music (GIM) sessions Ritu was completely off all medication. She was asked to rate the average level of anxiety in her life on a scale of 0 – 10 (10=extremely high anxiety) before and after the course of therapy. Ritu assessed herself as 9/10 before the therapy and an average level of 1/10 after the nine sessions. Through GIM therapy. Ritu had been able to have a supported look at the causes of her anxiety and as these emotions were explored and acknowledged, she gained a sense of release from her past experiences. She had found a new enthusiasm to move on with her life and get back to work.

### **Ritu's comments about Guided Imagery and Music Therapy:**

"It has helped me develop total calm within my everyday routine...making me feel complete both mentally and physically. The therapy has helped me regain and remember the inner person I am and

always was... I felt so lost before and unrecognizable, for anyone thinking about trying music therapy, I would highly recommend it – whether using it as a therapy or just to expand mind and learn relaxation.”

**Conclusion:**

The study concluded that a short series of Guided Imagery and Music Therapy Sessions may positively affect mood and reduce anxiety levels in human mind. Such changes have positive health implications for chronically stressed people.

**The full reference for this case study:**

Chirashree Ghosh, Music Therapist and author of this case study.

Dr. David Hamilton’s book “How Your Mind Can Heal Your Body” was used as a suggested reading for the patient. Music Therapy was applied under the supervision of Dr. B. Khandekar (Director, Kalavardhan Academy of Music Therapy, Jabalpur, M.P) Dr. S. Sarbadhikary (Psychiatrist, Kolkata).