

Best Practice for use of Music 4 Memories Headset

Set Safe Volume Levels

Recommended Volume Range: Set the volume at a level that is comfortable but not excessive. Ideally, keep the volume below 85 decibels (dB) to prevent hearing damage.

Test Volume Before Use: Always check the volume before placing the headphones on the patient to ensure it is set at a safe and comfortable level.

Adjust During Use: If the patient becomes restless or uncomfortable, check the volume and adjust if needed. Dementia patients may not be able to adjust the volume themselves.

Limit Duration of Use

Session Length: Limit headphone use to 20-30 minutes at a time, particularly if the patient is sensitive to sound. Long sessions may lead to sensory overload or discomfort.

Monitor for Signs of Discomfort: Watch for signs that the patient might be overwhelmed, such as agitation, restlessness, or trying to remove the headphones. Discontinue use if any distress is noted.

Rest Breaks: Schedule breaks between sessions to allow the patient to relax and avoid sensory overload.

Use Headphones in a Calm and Controlled Environment

Quiet Environment: Use the headphones in a quiet, distraction-free space to help the patient focus on the music and minimize any external noise that could interfere.

Avoid Using During Agitation: Do not use the headphones if the patient is agitated, anxious, or in a heightened emotional state. Music should be used as a calming or therapeutic tool, not as a distraction during episodes of distress.

Personalization of Music Choices

Music Selection: Choose music that is meaningful to the patient, such as songs from their youth or favourite genres. Music with familiar rhythms or lyrics can promote relaxation and positive memories.

Monitor Emotional Reactions: Observe the patient's emotional responses to the music. If they show signs of distress (e.g., agitation or confusion), switch the music or stop using the headphones.

Regularly Inspect Equipment

Check for Damage: Before each use, inspect the headphones for any signs of damage (e.g., broken wires, sharp edges, or malfunctioning parts) that could pose a safety risk to the patient.

Hygiene and Cleaning: Regularly clean the headphones, especially the ear cushions, to maintain hygiene and prevent the spread of germs. Use disposable hygiene covers or sanitize the ear pads between patients if shared equipment is used.

Caregiver Training and Monitoring

Training for Caregivers: Ensure caregivers are well-trained on the safe use of headphones, including setting appropriate volume levels, monitoring usage, and understanding the signs of sensory overload or discomfort.

Patient Monitoring: Caregivers should monitor the patient while the headphones are in use, especially for those who have difficulty expressing discomfort or adjusting the volume themselves.

Encourage Feedback: Encourage caregivers and patients (if able) to provide feedback about the music or volume levels, to make any necessary adjustments for future sessions.

Addressing Hearing Impairments

Hearing Loss: If the patient has known hearing impairments, adjust the volume accordingly to ensure they can hear the music without causing strain or damage to the ears.

Alternative Options: If the patient cannot tolerate headphones due to hearing issues or discomfort, consider alternative audio devices such as speakers with lower volume settings.

Create a Structured Routine

Routine Use: Establish a consistent routine for using the headphones, so the patient becomes familiar with the activity, and it becomes a calming ritual. Use music during specific times of the day (e.g., after meals, before bed) to promote relaxation and improve sleep quality.

Guidelines for Emergency Situations

Respond to Emergencies: In case of an adverse reaction (e.g., discomfort, distress, or agitation), caregivers should immediately remove the headphones and assess the situation.

Encourage Family Involvement

Involve Family Members: If possible, involve family members in selecting music or helping with the headphone sessions. Familiar voices or music might enhance the experience and emotional connection for the patient.

Additional Key Considerations

Technology Maintenance: Ensure that charging stations, cables, and charging ports are regularly maintained to prevent overheating or malfunctions.

Patient Consent: For patients with cognitive impairments, it's important to obtain informed consent (where possible) from the patient or their legal representative regarding the use of music therapy with headphones.