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# Research on creative therapies for people with dementia nearing the end of life

# OUTLINE

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## ❖ Palliative care and dementia

- ❖ Misperceptions and Barriers

## ❖ What creative arts offer

## ❖ Music

- ❖ Music and dementia

- ❖ Music and end of life

- ❖ Research: music for people living with dementia who are nearing the end of life and their carers.

## ❖ Way forward

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**“We want to sound a wake-up call in two directions, for those who care for people with dementia to pay attention to the dying, and those who care for people who are dying to include people with dementia” (Small et al. 2007:9)**

# Palliative care/End-of-life care: Misperceptions

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- ❖ “Palliative care is not synonymous with end-of-life care, but subsumes it” (Iliffe et al. 2013:1).
- ❖ “...palliative care is a philosophical approach to the care of any person suffering from a disease for which there is no cure in which the person may be nearing the end of life. The palliative care philosophy aims neither to prolong nor to shorten life but to maintain the physical, psychological and spiritual comfort of the individual until death” (de Vries 2003:115).

# What can creative arts offer?

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- ❖ Interaction
- ❖ Engagement
- ❖ Stimulation
- ❖ Distraction or removal from all types of experienced pain.
- ❖ Kitwood's basic human needs:
  - ❖ Occupation; identity; comfort; attachment; inclusion

...A HAVEN...

# Music

**“Music is the medium that transcends consciousness and is therefore uniquely able to reach patients within borderline states between life and death” (Renz et al., 2005:962)**



# Music and Dementia

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- ❖ **Familiar music = sign-posting**
  - ✧ **Embodied memories**
- ❖ **Mobile = brought to person**
- ❖ **Transform listener's environment**
- ❖ **Non-verbal language**
- ❖ **Reach all listeners**

# Music at the end of life

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❖ **Thanatology**

❖ **Music for Healing and Transition Program (MHTP)**

❖ **Entrainment**

❖ **Iso-principle**



# Research barriers

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❖ **Cochrane review (Bradt, J. and Dileo (2010) – only 5 studies**

❖ **Recruitment**

❖ **Ethics**

❖ **Evidence**

❖ **Cohort size**

# Research

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**Creative arts with people who have dementia and are nearing the end of life**

- ❖ **Clair (2002)**
- ❖ **Garabedian(2014)**



# ...Way forward...

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- ❖ **Unified basic training for creative arts practitioners**
- ❖ **Unified evaluative observation tool**
- ❖ **Funding support for a number of small studies including people nearing the end of life who have dementia**

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**Thank you!**

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