

# Music can be used as a way for people to control their mood and environment

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This research was conducted by **Kari Batt-Rawden** at the **Eastern Norway Research Institute, Norway**

## Summary

The research asked people with long-term illnesses in Norway the role and significance that music played in their lives, and how they used music for specific health and wellbeing purposes. Although cautious of drawing conclusions from a small sample, the authors speculate that music may be an effective means by which people can exercise some control over their environment and sense of themselves.

## The research used interesting methods to get at people's true relationship with music

22 adults with various long-term illnesses were asked about their relationship with music through a series of eight in-depth interviews that took place over a two to three week period. Two of the 22 had been professional musicians and about half of the remaining people were musically active in various ways. The researchers engaged the participants in an exercise to assemble a series of six themed compilation CDs. The themes included 'feeling at my best' and 'keepsake and memories'. Each participant picked one or two tracks for each CD. The CDs were put together, posted to all participants, and then they formed the basis for subsequent discussions.

## 'Musicking' as a means of self-determination

Musicking is a catch-all phrase to encompass all the ways that people can consciously and determinedly engage with music. The researchers found that

some participants used music in this way to actively construct their own sense of identity, and by making choices to listen to this or that music were able to feel empowered and in control of their lives in some way. Some participants also used music to cultivate or induce a particular mood or state of mind.

## Keywords

**interview** **music** **art therapy** **norway** **health**

Title	The role of music in a salutogenic approach to health
Author(s)	Batt-Rawden, K.
Publication date	2010
Source	International Journal of Mental Health Promotion, Vol 12, Iss 2, pp 11-18
Link	<a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14623730.2010.9721809">http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14623730.2010.9721809</a>

By **Culture.Case** | 14 April 2014 | **Impacts of arts and culture** , **Health and wellbeing impacts of arts and culture** |



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