



**FELICIA
WALL**
Music
Therapist

MUSIC THERAPY: FROM HOPELESSNESS TO A PLACE OF HOPEFULNESS

"We must see that music theory is not only about music, but about how people process it. To understand any art, we must look below its surface into the psychological details of its creation and absorption."

- Marvin Minsky

Music Therapist Felicia Wall began her career at the Phoenix Centre six years ago. "There wasn't a whole lot of space available in those days, so I'd pack a large suitcase with bongo drums, tambourines, Mexican shakers, and whatever else I could fit into it, drag it into my group counselling sessions, then repack it and drag it back home after the session," recalls Felicia.

Eventually, she was provided with a permanent group room, in the basement of the Phoenix Centre. "Although I was grateful to have the space, it wasn't a relaxing therapeutic space; it was rather stark, concrete floor, pale green walls and florescent lighting. So, with the support of the Phoenix staff and the help of some community members, we went to town; murals, patio lights, piano, shelving (for bongo drums) and comfortable fabric chairs, not to mention a stage to hold talent shows."

Compared to other working spaces at Phoenix, the oversized basement group room is unorthodox—but then again, so is Felicia's Music Therapy program.

In a warm tone of voice reflective of her gentle manner, Felicia offers the value music therapy has amongst Phoenix residents; "The use of music and musical elements helps the client with emotional processing and expression, reflection and self-awareness. It helps with one's confidence and self-esteem. Also, it helps to connect with the inner spiritual self," she smiles, "I witness authentic transformation of the individual, *going from a place of hopelessness to arriving in a place of hopefulness*. I'd pack my suitcase with instruments a million times if I had to, if that's what it takes to get to that place."

PHOENIX RESIDENT FEEDBACK:

"Music therapy has helped me become aware of some of the feelings I have felt during the playing of music. This awareness has been instrumental in awakening areas that I believe were needed in order to put some of these emotions behind me in a healthy way."

"It's easier to move through my emotions and it helps to learn more about our peers and their journey."

"Music therapy lets us see what others may be feeling but cannot express themselves [through words]. It is illuminating."



"Residents find their voice, gain confidence, process grief and access strength in themselves that they did not know they had."

- Felicia Wall