



## **Intern Applicant Information**

Thank you for your interest in an internship at Sound Starts Music Therapy. Below you will find information about our company as well as the process of applying.

### **CEO and Clinical Internship Director**

Mary Altom, MT-BC

Owner & Board Certified Music Therapist

[mary@soundstartsmusic.com](mailto:mary@soundstartsmusic.com)

469-443-6224 ext.700

### **Table of Contents**

Overview of Facility	2
Description of Services	2
Company Philosophy Statement	3-4
Intern Philosophy Statement	5-7
Internship Experience Overview	8
Criteria for Consideration	8
Application Process	9



***Overview of Facility:***

Sound Starts Music Therapy was founded by Mary Altom, MT-BC in 2011 and currently employs 9 additional board-certified music therapists.

Sound Starts Music Therapy is a private practice that provides groups and individual music therapy sessions as well as therapeutic music instruction in Frisco and Grapevine Texas (suburbs of Dallas-Fort Worth), with most services taking place at our centers. We also hold community contracts with local schools and a neurorehabilitation center.

Sound Starts Music Therapy primarily serves children, teens, and young adults who are Autistic or have special needs. We also serve some adults recovering from various neurologic injuries.

Frisco is one of the fastest growing cities in the U.S. and has a population of approximately 200,000. Frisco is home to several professional sports teams, IKEA, and ample shopping and dining opportunities. Additionally, all the amenities offered by the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex are just minutes away.

***Description of Services:***

Most music therapy services are designed for children with special needs. We primarily conduct individual sessions 30-60 minutes 1x per week for each client at our center. We hold community contracts primarily in schools and in a neurorehabilitation center that are 30-60 minutes in length. A familiar opening and closing song is often used each week to create rapport and structure. Specially designed music activities are used to address specific objectives. Objectives primarily address communication, social, motor, and cognitive domains.



***Company Philosophy Statement:***

The purpose and passion of Sound Starts Music Therapy is to help individuals grow bright and strong through music via high quality music therapy services. Our core values are experiencing growth, taking ownership, supporting our community, and embracing positivity. Sound Starts Music Therapy and its therapists are dedicated to client-centered treatment. This means we often embrace an eclectic or multi-modal framework. We look at the needs of each individual and use the methods and techniques that will best help our clients make progress toward therapeutic goals. If the client responds well to behavioral music strategies, we use that. If the client responds well to improvisational techniques, we use that. We care about how we can best help each client succeed through music.

We believe that the value of music and the role it plays as a therapeutic modality rests in music's timelessness. As we grow and change, the music that we are drawn to may also evolve to reflect our personal preferences and needs. The belief that music is timeless allows us to serve our clients over a long period of time, sometimes many years. As children develop into teens and teens grow into adults, it is possible that music preferences also change. When needed, we select different music to help our clients access music experiences and meet their goals in therapy. Music therapy should not be a stagnant experience. "I met my goal so now I'm done" is not our mindset. Rather, once a goal has been achieved, we ask, "How can music help you take the next step? What is needed now?"

Our team of therapists uses a variety of information sources to determine client needs/goals/objectives during the planning and implementation phases of treatment. The client, the client's guardians, the IMTAP (Baxter et al., 2007), members of the client's treatment team both privately and in the community, and the music therapist's instincts and experience drive the creation of a treatment plan. Specifically, we glean information during an initial meeting with a family and client. This first step is a consultation as opposed to a formal evaluation. During the intake process we gather documents and pursue a formal evaluation via the IMTAP when warranted. This typically occurs if a family wishes to pursue insurance reimbursement. After the evaluation process is complete, music therapy sessions begin. The music therapist develops rapport with the client and the direction of therapy sessions continues to develop clarity.

During sessions the client may play an active role depending on their needs. Clients may sing, verbalize, engage in music making, and process musical experiences as their needs allow. Clients are given frequent opportunities to express their musical preferences. Music plays a primary role as a means to access skills and concepts that a client may not otherwise learn and retain via verbal methods. Music also plays the role of communication for clients that may not be able to verbally express their thoughts. We conduct many sessions where music is all that is



needed. Talking or back and forth verbal conversation may become unnecessary as the music therapist and client engage musically to work toward goals.

Our specific theoretical frameworks are most closely tied to behavioral and developmental music therapy approaches though at times we may utilize techniques championed by other approaches. At Sound Starts we recognize that music can alter behavior based on four principles. Music can be used as a cue, as a time and body movement structure, as a focus of attention, and as a reward (Madsen, 1968). Though these behavioral principles in music were named more than 50 years ago, these techniques are still applicable and effective for engaging the children, teens, and young adults we serve.

Sessions provided by our team typically address communication, behavior, motor, and cognitive skills. Our clients and their families specifically seek music therapy at Sound Starts to gain or regain skills that closely align with a client's developmental level. Because we primarily serve individuals with a wide variety of developmental needs, our therapists are in the habit of observing present levels of development and existing skills. Existing skills become a baseline for further development and goals for our clients. Developmental music therapy is founded on the relationship between human and musical development and suggests that a music therapist's practice is informed by the use music strategies to develop skills appropriate to a client's developmental level (Briggs, 2015). Overall, we have found that the behavioral and developmental music therapy approaches we use compliment one another well. Our clients respond well to these methods and grow bright and strong through music which is the ultimate purpose of our business.

## References

- Baxter, H. T., Berghofer, J. A., MacEwan, L., Nelson, J., Peters, K., & Roberts, P. (2007). *The Individualized Music Therapy Assessment Profile*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Briggs, C. A. (2015). Developmental Approaches. In B. L. Wheeler (Ed.). *Music Therapy Handbook* (pp.172-182). The Guilford Press.
- Madsen, C. K., Cotter, V., & Madsen, C. H. (1968). A Behavioral Approach to Music Therapy. *Journal of Music Therapy*, 5(3), 69–71. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jmt/5.3.69>



***Intern Philosophy Statement:***

The purpose and passion of Sound Starts Music Therapy is to help individuals grow bright and strong through music via high quality music therapy services. We hold the core values of experiencing growth, taking ownership, supporting our community, and embracing positivity. Our purpose and core values are directly correlated to our desire to provide education and training to students via practicum placement and internship. Growing bright and strong refers not only to our clients but to our approach with students. At Sound Starts, interns grow bright and strong in their clinical practice.

Our philosophy for training interns is best described as eclectic and one that aligns with our overall developmental and behavioral approaches to music therapy (Briggs, 2015; Madsen, 1968). We integrate both behavioral and competency-based models in our supervision methods. In a behavioral model of supervision, Eyre (2019) summarized that the supervisee acquires skills needed to learn appropriate behaviors and eliminate inappropriate ones. Additionally, the competency-based model draws on the competencies set forth by the AMTA (Farnan, 2001 & AMTA, 2013). Using competencies as a baseline allows supervision to occur around specific areas of intern need.

Interns also experience their own series of developmental phases: orientation, learning, development, maturation, and entry level practice (DiMaio, 2021). In the beginning phases at Sound Starts, a psychoeducational approach is most helpful because most times the intern requires concrete instruction and modeling. As the intern gains skills, supervisors may move to a psychotherapy driven supervision model. As interns become more in sync with Sound Starts' philosophy of music therapy and confident in their own practice, supervisors can engage the intern in deeper reflections about music strategies, client responses, and create and evaluate plans for further development of skills.

Interns effectively learn skills in clinical practice through observation, training, and implementation with supervision from Board-Certified Music Therapists. By providing a structured process, interns develop and grow through their clinical training. Practice and frequent repetition are necessary for a music therapist to develop competence. Interns also benefit from learning in a style that reasonably meets their needs. Opportunities to fail and pivot, in the moment feedback, verbal processing following a session, and written notes are a few ways that supervisors may engage with interns in the learning process.

Sound Starts provides each intern with the following opportunities and methods of training: active observation, monthly seminars, supervision meetings, interaction with client families and treatment team members, co-leading and leading individual and group sessions,



data taking and documentation, community presentations, and observation of music therapists outside the Sound Starts sphere.

Interns are integrated into sessions from the first day of internship through observation. Interns gain value and insight by noting the different styles and approaches of each music therapist on the Sound Starts team. Following the observation period, interns transition into co-leading and eventually independent leading when they are ready. In addition to daily notes, completion of a case study is one way that interns develop documentation and data taking skills. Supervision is also vital to the intern's learning process. During supervision meetings with the Internship Director and supervising music therapists, interns have the opportunity to discuss wins and challenges in sessions as well as personal life events that impact their overall performance.

Given that musical skills must be well developed prior to internship, the most critical skill an intern can develop during the internship period is the ability to problem solve and know when and how to seek supervision. Music therapists must constantly innovate to ensure we are meeting the needs of our clients. To do so, we must be able to recognize a problem, find multiple solutions, and select an appropriate course of action. Problem solving is a process that must be repeated often as music therapists refine musical experiences to elicit increased responses and development of a client. When an intern possesses this skill set, they are well prepared to practice. Bruscia refers to acquiring the skill of problem solving as "develop[ing] the reflexivity essential to working effectively when not being supervised." (2019, p. 305).

Music plays the role of facilitator in the development of an intern. Interns must continually add songs and strategies to their repertoire in order to develop skills and meet client needs. Additionally, interns must experience music on two levels when working with clients. The first level is the "learning phase." The intern learns a song or music strategy and brings it to a session. Almost immediately they recognize the difference between knowing a song and knowing a song. This is when they reach the second level of interaction with music. The music becomes effortless and internalized so that the intern can step into a greater role of client awareness and interaction. Music and music strategies also facilitate other professional skills such as responsibility, preparation, time management, problem solving/adaptability, and interaction. Interns are encouraged to use their preferred music to help them manage self-care and meet personal needs such as increased concentration, relaxation, or stimulation.

There are at least two significant ways to use music to help develop an intern's music skills, interactions skills, leadership skills, and other skills included in the AMTA Professional Competencies. The first is directly. Just as music and music strategies can be used to help our clients gain skills, music can also be used to help interns retain information. The second is



involvement as a participant or recipient of musical experiences. When an individual experiences music in a similar way as a client might, they gain a deeper understanding of the process through which they are expected to bring their clients (Khare, K., & Lee, C., 2019). For example, an intern may have the opportunity to participate in a drumming training with lecture and experiential components. While textbook knowledge will be gained throughout the training, the true transformation occurs when the intern participates in music making with colleagues and later steps into the facilitator role. After the experience, the intern will likely feel more empowered and competent to lead clients through a similar process. Similarly, it is Sound Starts' goal to help interns feel empowered and competent in their practice.

### References

- American Music Therapy Association. (AMTA). (2013). AMTA professional competencies. Retrieved May 14, 2021, from <https://www.musictherapy.org/about/competencies/>
- Briggs, C. A. (2015). Developmental Approaches. In B. L. Wheeler (Ed.). *Music Therapy Handbook* (pp.172-182). The Guilford Press.
- Bruscia, K. (2019). A Model of Clinical Supervision. In M. Forinash (Ed.) *Music Therapy Supervision 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. Barcelona publishers.
- DiMaio, L. (2021, March 28th). *Association Internship Approval Committee presents Supervising the music therapy intern* [PowerPoint Slides].
- Eyre, L. (2019) Theoretical Approaches to Supervision. In M. Forinash (Ed.) *Music Therapy Supervision 2nd Edition*. Barcelona publishers.
- Farnan, L. A. (2001). Competency-based approach to intern supervision. In M. Forinash (Ed.), *Music therapy supervision 1st edition* (pp. 117-134). Barcelona publishers.
- Khare, K., & Lee, C. (2019). Music-Centered Supervision of Clinical Improvisation. In M. Forinash (Ed.) *Music Therapy Supervision 2nd Edition*. Barcelona publishers.
- Madsen, C. K., Cotter, V., & Madsen, C. H. (1968). A Behavioral Approach to Music Therapy. *Journal of Music Therapy*, 5(3), 69–71. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jmt/5.3.69>



### **Internship Experience Overview:**

Our interns can expect the following:

- Weekly meetings with your supervisor
- Ample opportunities to practice documentation and planning
- Ample hours of observation each week
- Experience with co-treatment
- Ample independent treatment experience
- An intern project related to starting a program or relationship in the community or at the center
- A case study
- Community presentations
- Observation opportunities with other music therapists throughout the community
- Monthly special topic trainings including Adapted Lessons, ABA, Business/Insurance, SEMTAP, Drumming for Kids, Neurorehab, Texas Medicaid Waivers and Consultations/Marketing

No housing, meals or stipend are available at this time.

Intern must have a car and the appropriate insurance.

COVID-19 Vaccine is required.

Fingerprinting may be required at the interns expense (approximately \$50)

Liability insurance must be provided by the intern either by purchasing coverage through HPSO or by the intern's university.

### **Criteria for Consideration:**

Intern is expected to:

- sing on pitch with appropriate rhythm and volume
- accompany self on piano and guitar in a variety of keys (A, C, D, E, G) using a minimum of I, IV, V7, vi chords in each key
- compose simple original songs
- be comfortable with musical skills so that focus is on the client
- interact with team music therapists, directors, other professionals in a respectful and timely manner
- clearly articulate when asked "What is music therapy?"
- be on time to scheduled sessions
- complete basic session planning and implement planned or practiced music therapy strategies





**Application Process:**

Again, thank you for your interest in the Sound Starts Music Therapy Internship.  
*No legal affiliation is required.*

1. If you would like to submit an application, please follow the link below:  
<https://goo.gl/forms/SDQVkdK3nHwi5IYz2>
2. Submit official transcripts
3. Submit 1 letter of recommendation authored by the Director of the Music Therapy Department.
4. Submit 1 letter of recommendation authored by a music therapy practicum supervisor.
5. Submit a letter of eligibility from the academic director.

**Your application will not be considered complete until all necessary documents have been received.**

**Capacity and Due Dates:**

Sound Starts offers 4 clinical internships each year.  
Applications for internship will be due as follows:

**January and April start dates**

Applications due July 1st of previous year

**July and October start dates**

Applications due January 1st of same year

Occasionally, deadline extensions may occur in order to accommodate holiday or other event schedules.

The Internship Director will contact finalists to schedule an interview within one week following the internship application deadline and will notify all interviewed finalists of the decision no more than two weeks after interviews.

The interview will last approximately 60 minutes. Interview conversation topics relate to the responses that the intern candidate provided on the Internship Application. The second half of the interview will consist of the applicant conducting a mock session. The internship director will judge the candidate's spontaneity. Additionally, the candidate may pose quality questions not previously covered. Virtual interviews are available when needed.