

SHUT UP AND DANCE

Music + Somatic Interventions in Addiction Counseling

Attendee Practice Handout | Journey Together 2026 | Caroline Cirone, LADAC I, CYT

CORE IDEA: Music can be a doorway into emotion, embodiment, regulation, vulnerability, and connection - without requiring clients to start with words.

A Practical Toolbox You Can Use Right Away

TOOL	HOW TO USE IT
1. Music State Check	Play 30-60 second clips with different energy or emotional tone. Prompt: Ask: What changed in your body? Breath? Mood? Attention? Urge to move? <i>Use for: icebreakers, emotional awareness, PAWS check-ins, craving-state recognition.</i>
2. Somatic Mirroring	Pair clients. One leads slow movement while the other mirrors; then switch. Repeat with music. Prompt: Ask: What was it like to lead vs. follow? What changed with the music? Did you feel more connected? <i>Use for: co-regulation, trust, attunement, boundaries, connection.</i>
3. Tension + Release	Invite clients to gently tense and release selected muscle groups while noticing the contrast. Prompt: Ask: Where do you hold tension? What changed after releasing it? <i>Use for: grounding, stress reduction, body awareness, transition into deeper work.</i>
4. Body Scan: Before + After	Pause before and after an intervention to notice sensations, energy, breath, posture, and emotion. Prompt: Ask: What is different now? What stayed the same? <i>Use for: building interoception and helping clients recognize regulation in real time.</i>
5. Voice + Breath	Use humming, sustained tones, simple vocal warm-ups, or singing as an engaging alternative to traditional breathwork. Prompt: Ask: What happened to your breath, jaw, chest, or confidence? <i>Use for: breath regulation, self-expression, finding one's "true voice," authenticity, and boundaries.</i>
6. Music as a Back Door to Insight	Use songs, artists, lyrics, instruments, or dance history to invite storytelling and emotional exploration. Prompt: Ask: What song fits your day? What music reminds you of a turning point? What does this artist/song understand about you? <i>Use for: reluctant clients, limited emotional vocabulary, identity work, trauma-informed exploration.</i>
7. Community Music / Karaoke	Invite low-pressure group singing, rhythm, karaoke, or shared music-making. Keep participation flexible. Prompt: Ask: What was it like to be seen, heard, or supported by the group? <i>Use for: fellowship, morale, sober fun, confidence, belonging, and milieu connection.</i>

Integrating Music + Somatic Work Into Clinical Practice

INDIVIDUAL SESSIONS	GROUP SESSIONS	MILIEU / COMMUNITY
• Do they like music, play an instrument, sing, or dance? • What music feels connected to their identity or history? • Use songs as prompts for emotions, memories, hopes, boundaries, or values.	• Start with a low-risk music icebreaker. • Add a brief body check before and after. • Use mirroring, vocal work, lyric reflection, rhythm, or karaoke to create shared experience.	• Use music intentionally to shift energy or morale. • Invite collaborative playlists or low-pressure karaoke. • Use music to create sober experiences of play, expression, and connection.

Quick Prompts

- "Who is your favorite artist - and what do you connect with about them?"
- "If today had a soundtrack, what song would be playing?"
- "If you could hear any song right now, what would it be and why?"
- "Where did you feel that song in your body?"
- "Did the music make you want to move, pull away, get still, or connect?"

Read the Room: Adapt the Intervention

The same intervention can land very differently depending on age, culture, physical ability, trauma history, musical preferences, treatment stage, and group cohesion. Choose music and movement that fit the people in front of you - not the exercise you planned.

Ask yourself: What would I change for adolescents? Veterans? Clients in detox? Older adults? Clients with limited mobility? A group with low trust?

Trauma-Informed Guardrails

- Offer choice: participation, movement, eye contact, singing, and touch should never be forced.
- Keep movement accessible and adaptable; seated participation is valid.
- Use brief check-ins to notice activation and return to grounding when needed.
- Do not assume a song is calming or safe for everyone; music can carry powerful autobiographical memories.
- Process the experience without pushing for disclosure, and stay within your clinical scope.

My 1-Week Integration Plan

One tool I will try:

Population / setting:

Music or prompt I will use:

How I will check regulation before + after:

START SMALL. NOTICE THE BODY. FOLLOW THE CLIENT. USE MUSIC TO CREATE CONNECTION.

Conference takeaway based on the presentation "Shut Up and Dance: Music and Somatic Interventions in Addiction Counseling."