

France

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Certificate of Music Therapy
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Snapshot

Area

643, 801 square kilometers; largest
West European country

Population

65,312,246 (July 2011 est.)

Official Language

French

Ethnic Groups

Celtic and Latin with Teutonic, Slavic,
North Africa, Indochinese, Basque
minorities

Median Age

39.9 years

Children under 5

0-14 years: 18.5% (male 6,180,905/
female 5,886, 849)

Source

The World Factbook
[https://www.cia.gov/library/
publications/the-world-factbook/
geos/fr.html](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/fr.html)



**"We are molded and remolded by those who have loved us; and though the love may pass, we are nevertheless their work, for good or ill."
– François Mauriac in *Attachment* by John Bowlby**

Demographics

Music therapists have been practicing in France since the '70's. These "pioneer" therapists were trained in private, post-university professional programs. Over the years, the training centers, both private and public, have worked together to create the *French Federation of Music Therapy (FFM)*. Today, five centers offering high-level training belong to the Federation. The training centers, either university-affiliated or private institutions, are located in Bordeaux, Dijon, Montpellier, Nantes, and Paris. All of the training programs are based in psychodynamic theory and emphasize the importance of personal therapy and life-long learning. Strongly committed to cooperation with other European countries, the FFM is a long-standing member of the *European Music Therapy Confederation (EMTC)* of which François-Xavier Vrait, director of the training Center in Nantes, was a founding member.

In the fall of 2011, a government-recognized Masters Degree program in Creative Arts Therapy will open at the University of Paris, replacing the Professional Master's program created in 2004. Professor Edith Lecourt, internationally known for her

numerous publications on music therapy, has played a key role in encouraging research in music therapy in France. Several practicing music therapists have earned a Doctoral degree in Psychology based on their research in the field of music therapy. The exact number of therapists practicing music therapy today in France is not known as there is no obligation of membership in a professional association. The FFM has 110 active members in its register. The members all adhere to the Ethical Code based on the EMTC Ethical Code.

Throughout the country, small groups of therapists have created workgroups to share their experience and maintain a high level of practice. The only specialized journal published in the French language, *La Revue de Musicothérapie*, was created in 1981 by the French Association of Music Therapy, one of the five member associations of the FFM. Four issues are published yearly.

Background Information

In spite of this long history of music therapy practice in France, the profession has still not achieved official recognition at the government level. A workgroup is in the process of finalizing the steps towards government recognition, which should facilitate access to jobs. Most music therapists have accredited training

in a health care profession and in this way, are able to practice music therapy in various settings. For example, a university-trained psychologist could be hired under the official title of Psychologist with the expressed objective of practicing as a music therapist. Recently, several therapists have succeeded in achieving official professional recognition in their institutions even though the profession is not officially recognized at the national level. Increasingly, trained music therapists are making the choice to work in private practice. A few health insurance policies have even accepted to cover some of the cost of music therapy for children.

Common Approaches

The majority of music therapists in France practice in public settings as part of an integrated team. The music therapy approach applied by a multidisciplinary team is defined according to the theoretical framework of the unit; most often psychodynamic, but also cognitive. Rather than “receptive music therapy,” the therapists use “active music therapy” including improvisation when working with young children.

Music therapists can be found working in a wide range of early childhood settings. They are present in programs preparing couples for childbirth, in neonatal intensive care units, pediatric units, cancer care, child day-care centers, or in foster child placement centers. In child psychiatry units, the important role of music therapy has long been recognized in work with children with autism spectrum disorders and multiple handicaps. Family music therapy is also practiced in France. Sometimes employed in the school system, music therapists work in nursery schools and kindergartens often using a more “pedagogical” music therapy approach for young children with behavior disorders.

Prominent Publications

- Aucher M.-L. (1997). *En corps chanté [The body sings]*. Paris, France: Hommes et Groupes.
- Lecourt, E. (2007). *La musicothérapie analytique de groupe [Analytical*

- group music therapy]*. Courlay, France: Fuzeau.
- Lecourt, E. (2005). *Découvrir la musicothérapie [Discover music therapy]*. Paris, France: Eyrolles.
- Verdeau-Paillès Jacqueline (1981). *Le bilan psychomusical de la personnalité [Psycho-musical evaluation of the personality]*. Courlay, France: Fuzeau.

About the Author



Adrienne Lerner is a trained music therapist and psychotherapist with a doctorate in clinical psychology. After working for many years in public institutions – including an adult psychiatry unit, a pediatric unit, and a private placement center for abused children- she is currently self-employed as a private practitioner. Dr. Lerner is a board member of the Fédération Française de Musicothérapie (FFM) and Vice-President of the European Music Therapy Confederation (EMTC).

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