

Music2LINK

Music2LINK, Calgary

LINKages Society of Alberta

Project Lead: Ruby Lecot, Executive Director

The LINKages' Music2LINK intergenerational program builds on the experience and learning of a previous music-based pilot program for persons living with dementia. Thanks to generous funding through Alberta Health Services, we learned a great deal about the impact and promising practices of intergenerational music-based programs, and also about how to improve support to persons living with dementia, and their care partners.

The program involves students from select Calgary Junior and Senior High Schools, and is music-based, in that each session will begin with 20 minutes of music for the group, incorporating popular songs from previous generations to assist with calming and present moment orientation. Before the first session, students receive intergenerational sensitivity training, as well as specialized training about dementia, about how to engage and support someone experiencing dementia respectfully and compassionately.

The Music2LINK program is held weekly or bi-weekly for one hour, depending on the schedule and needs of the care centres and school. Monthly "Care Partner Nights" will be held at each care centre site to achieve a number of goals:

1. Involve care partners in music based activities so that they may learn options for interacting with their loved ones, including creating a play-list of music for the person living with dementia to support with enjoyable activities as the disease progresses.
2. Care partners will receive information about dementia and self-care so that they are better able to manage the demands of caring for a loved one with dementia.
3. Care partners will feel the support of the students, knowing that their loved one is well cared-for, and engaged in enjoyable interactions when they are not able to be present.

Music2LINK will focus on care centres where the majority of residents are experiencing mid-late stage dementia. The project will begin in 2 care centre settings, involving a maximum of 12 seniors and 24 students per site. In the second year, the program will evolve to include a community site for individuals still living outside of care centres, and will expand to at least two rural sites in Alberta where LINKages intergenerational programming is taking place.

LINKages will be working with the University of Calgary to evaluate the impact and outcomes of the Music2LINK program so that we may contribute to the provincial knowledge base and dissemination regarding compassionate, community-based, and effective options for engaging and supporting persons living with dementia.

