

## MUSIC IN LOCKDOWN



Having very little experience with virtual online chat applications, it was a daunting prospect to be immediately plunged into an unknown world of online music sessions due to the global pandemic Covid:19.

The nature of my music sessions are very much focused around intensive interaction, developing communication skills, confidence and building on trust. To have to suddenly adapt to this through a screen was a situation I never thought would work. I was fortunately proved wrong.

Very early on in lockdown it became apparent just how eager parents and carers were for creative activities to do at home. I made various videos showing how to make homemade instruments using objects you have around the house. I created a YouTube channel and posted videos on social media. These videos have continued throughout lockdown and schools and residential homes have been able to access them as well

**“We both really enjoyed Fiona’s series of videos. We found the videos engaging and fun, and the instruments were all able to be made with items we already had in the house. It was really nice to find something both fun, musical and educational online to help us pass the time. My son is 7 and didn’t need lots of help, he managed to make the instruments himself with supervision and only a little instruction here and there.**

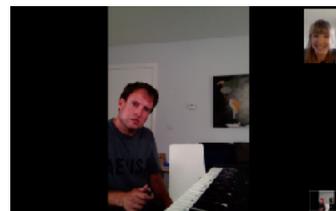
**Here's what he had to say:**

**"The videos were amazing. I wish I could plug the instruments in and we could be a band!"**



The online one to one music sessions have fascinated me. I have noticed huge developments in confidence, listening skills, communication, engagement and concentration - more than I had ever anticipated. The fact I am not physically sitting next to the participant means that they have to do things on their own, or supported by a parent or carer.

**“My son Billy came home to the family during lockdown. During this time he had weekly online music sessions with Fiona. It has been so lovely seeing the relationship between them, Billy singing along and bouncing up and down to the music. There is a structure to the class that Billy recognises and enjoys. Fiona has also recognised that Billy is ready to progress and he is being encouraged now to use two hands whilst playing the keyboard. Amazing.”**

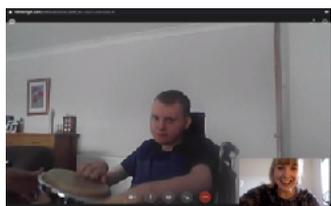


For my participants in a more sensory setting, it has predominantly been about the interaction, hearing and seeing someone who is not necessarily with them permanently at home during this time. Continuing with structure and routine has been extremely important with these sessions, so there is continuity and familiarity in what has been a stressful and unpredictable time.

**“Julia usually has music therapy in her own home where Fiona visits her, she benefits very much from these sessions so we were worried when she had to shield during lockdown and was confined to her room. Fiona set up a FaceTime session for Julia and using her iPad on an adjustable mount Julia now continued her sessions from her bed and they could be left in private to conduct the 1:1 sessions.**

**We didn't know how Julia would respond as she has no speech to tell us but she communicates through eye contact and expression. We needn't have worried as she responded very enthusiastically. She learned the routine straight away and would get very excited when the iPad got set up. She gave Fiona eye contact from the first session and the sessions are a highlight for her. She has missed out on a lot due to shielding and these sessions have been something she very much looks forward to and has benefitted Julia so much that she may prefer to continue her sessions in this way after lockdown!**

**Providing music therapy in this format has truly helped make a difficult situation much more fun and bare able for Julia.”**



**“The online music sessions have worked well for Ryan - better than I expected. Ryan already knew Fiona and I have been delighted with how well he is listening to her voice and looking at her on the screen. Fiona has made these sessions fun using a mixture of songs and a wide variety of musical instruments. It's also been great for me to have someone else in charge for half an hour!”**

I was fortunate enough to have been approached early on in lockdown by a wonderful charity called PAMIS who support families who have children with PMLD (Profound, Multiple, Learning Disabilities). They asked if I could lead 2 music group sessions a week for families who were keen to have online activities for their children who for obvious reasons could not attend day services or school.

**“We have been lucky enough to join Fiona's music therapy sessions through Pamis and Ellie absolutely loves the sessions. They are engaging, enthusiastic and inclusive. I was not sure how online music therapy would work but it is fantastic! Fiona makes it work really well,**

**speaking to the participants individually and including everyone, preparing brilliantly for the sessions sending out the programme and lyrics to songs in advance.**

**Ellie loves the sessions, they make her very happy, she joins in with all the songs, plays her instruments and is very excited by the whole session. I believe that the sessions benefit Ellie because she sees other people and is able to socialise. It provides some routine to her week and the sessions genuinely make her happy.”**

The PAMIS music group sessions have been an opportunity for families across Scotland to come together once or twice a week, play their instruments, sing familiar songs, and have that half hour away from reality, enjoying the music and the time together.

**“Ritchie has absolutely loved his group music sessions via Zoom during lockdown. Ritchie is missing his friends so much and although he doesn’t know the other children, it is lovely to have a portal to the world beyond our house. Ritchie looks forward to music every week and is becoming more and more confident every week. Ritchie also looks forward to the lesson plan so he can plan his soft toys to bring.**



**Due to the accessibility of Zoom as a platform, Ritchie was also able to take part whilst in hospital. It was a welcome part of a normal routine activity during the restrictions of a hospital bed.**

**Fiona’s groups are always fun and engaging and extremely easy to follow with suggestions of actions, instruments or music to suit your own child’s abilities and preferences.”**

**“Dillon has been accessing the online sessions weekly. We have found them to be a lifeline for him as he just loves his music. He engages in the fun sessions and has a really good time. It is such a pleasure to see Fiona and friends to keep in touch. This has been very positive experience for Dillon and myself and the theme days make a special touch.”**

Interactive music and movement sessions with mothers and toddlers has also started to prove popular through online applications.

**“Our 15 month old toddler adores her weekly music sessions with Fiona. It’s amazing how much Alice gets out of it, the music and movement are so stimulating. Every session gives us songs and actions to sing throughout the week!”**

In what has been a very unpredictable, strange and difficult time for many people, the online music sessions have been a form of escapism, but also confirming that we are all in this together, the music is just the icing on the cake.

I would like to thank all families, organisations and charities who have believed in the work I do; have seen the benefits music can bring to the people they love or support, and have been open to the idea of online music sessions. This has very much been a team effort during lockdown which I am hugely appreciative of. Thank you.



For more information about future online group or 1-1 music sessions over the summer, please visit:

**[www.facebook.com/fsharpmusicpractice](http://www.facebook.com/fsharpmusicpractice)**

Or email Fiona at:

**[fsharpmusicpractice@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:fsharpmusicpractice@yahoo.co.uk)**

For videos of homemade instruments or action songs please go to:

**[www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)** and search for **[F Sharp Music Practice](#)**

For further information about PAMIS please visit:

**[www.pamis.org.uk](http://www.pamis.org.uk)**