

Video Transcript: Aha Moments

Virginia Dougherty, MT-BC, MOTR/L, Creative Arts Therapist, VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System:

You know, music therapists, musicians, we all sort of have this common understanding of the power of music. Not everybody does. I'm thinking that my recreation staff here does; they've been involved in it, and they know—they know. But you get physicians, nursing, other people that think more again in that medical model of stated, specific kinds of goals that can be like numerical kind of things—like the veteran will do this five times or, you know, we will give the veteran this medication so that his blood pressure will go down. And so they think in very concrete kind of ways because you can measure that; it's a very measureable goal.

To tell a medical model kind of person that we're doing some nice music, they may be more inclined to say, "Ooh, isn't that nice entertainment for the veterans." When they actually come in and observe the groups, and especially again with these musicians from the Pittsburgh Symphony, they have an aha moment. They go, "Now I see the value of this music in this environment. This was amazing." Or it was, "Oh, we have to have them back." Or, "You do that!" *[Virginia laughs.]* You know, it is—it's an aha moment! It would be great if in the future we could quantify that sort of thing, and we still haven't quite figured out how to do that. Some of these staff members experiencing what the veterans are experiencing when the PSO comes in is of really top value because they will then make sure that it continues—that they will provide things for the veterans.