

Drum Circle

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Drums! Why would anyone want to play the drums! Why would anyone over the age of 60 want to beat on a drum? Who would even want to try this as an activity? In a nursing home?

I'll be honest with you; the residents were not very enthusiastic when I first introduced the idea of playing drums. But I had recently listened to a presentation by our WRAP President Deb Bera who reminded me that we have to be trying to deinstitutionalize our activity programming. Also, I believe that you are never too old to learn something new, myself included!

My research started with my computer and a link to a website that said a drum circle could help reduce your chances of getting cancer! Yes, there was research done on this, and it shows that drumming can help strengthen the immune system!

So the next step was for me to physically go to a drum circle and participate. I was blown away! I had a blast! I wanted my residents to experience the same way I felt. I bought several books and a DVD on drum circles.

I picked out my drum circle set for the residents and started fundraising. It helped that it was near Christmas so donations almost covered the complete cost of the drums. Also, for Christmas, Santa brought me my first drum! I figured I needed to be comfortable playing, if I am going to help others.

Then, Step 1-- I had to make sure I had storage space for the drums. Step 2-- I had to make sure I had a room with doors I could close. Step 3-- I had to get my Administrators permission for the new activity, (it is very loud).

The drum set came in mid-February. I ordered a set large enough for 20 people. We get together and play once a week. We give out every drum we have, every week! Our drum circle has been a huge success!!

Keep in mind that I am not a music therapist. During the drum circle time I act as a “Facilitator”. My role is to help the circle by encouraging them to play. There is no script; there is no “wrong drumming”. Last week we listened to South African drums as part of our circle time. Which by the way, lasts from 30 to 45 minutes.

Many of the ideas that I use came from the books, videos, and experience of participating in a drum circle. There are also courses offered to become certified as a Drum Circle Facilitator.

I ordered my drums from REMO drums of California. The cost was close to \$1600 (remember—fundraising!!). I ordered what is called the Health Rhythms Mini Collection. I went with this company and this drum set for several reasons. REMO uses recycled materials to produce many of their drums, and they use synthetic drum heads (no goats lost their skin). The drums are American made, and the set I ordered can be easily sanitized without causing any problems to the drums.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions about setting up this activity. You can reach me by email at michael_a_boucher@yahoo.com The website for REMO drums is www.remo.com I sent along a picture of most of our drum set to go with this article. Start drumming and have fun!!!