

Musical Gift

How might we create meaningful experiences and authentic connection for those with life-limiting illnesses to reduce their emotional and social isolation?

The Challenge

Being told you have an incurable life-limiting or terminal illness has a profound impact on the life you have left. Not only is it physically life-changing, but it can also be emotionally and socially isolating.

User research has revealed that patients nearing the end of life want to connect, to open up, and to belong. They seek a safe space and trusted connections to allow them to express their authentic feelings, fears, hopes and uniqueness without feeling burdensome or misunderstood.

We recognised there was a need for patients with life-limiting illnesses to overcome social and emotional isolation and feel more connected and supported within their community, in a non-intimidating and intuitive way. Music has proved to be a key medium in this space, allowing for interpersonal connection and emotional expression beyond what words alone can express.

The Solution

“Musical Gift” is a simple but heartfelt befriending service that restores voice, community, and comfort through music. Through music befriending we hope to forge organic connections between volunteers and patients with life-limiting illnesses, via the common language of music.

We seek to journey with patients through music: by meeting them where they are, focusing on the process of befriending, and having music become a spontaneous part of the process. This might involve reminiscing over familiar childhood tunes, or communal music making through small-group performances that are highly personalised and customised through an in-depth understanding of the individual. Over time, the aim of the solution is to build ongoing relationships with music as a key facilitator.

Musical gift is not focused on the musical outputs or products, but on the journey of companionship. Any type of music can be used, and it can be integrated in any form according to the patients’ preferences, be it through live performance or composition.

Our volunteers take the role of music befrienders where music is merely the platform to help spark organic connections.

The Impact

Existing solutions for people living with life-limiting illnesses are largely based on conversational befriending, which we recognize is not for everybody, while music-based solutions tend to be one-off events and lack personalization or person-to-person connection. By combining both music and befriending, and allowing them to enable one another, we provide an unprecedented level of connection through multimodal engagement, as well as continuity through organic relationship-building.

Vote!

Vote for us to transform the final years of life into moments filled with connection, authentic expression, and belonging.



The Design Team

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