

## Using the Moyo Drum in Healthcare Settings By Diane “Annie” Mathias, MA

I love this instrument! The Moyo Drum by Visionhawk Music ([www.moyodrum.com](http://www.moyodrum.com)) is a steel tongue drum with a magnificent chime tone. These drums have pentatonic tuning so all the notes go together. No musical ability is needed to play; the drum may be played with your hands or with mallets provided with the drum. The Moyo is easy to play and always a huge success. I had used this instrument in a variety of venues. Others have too...

One of my associates visited me and immediately saw the Moyo Drum in my living room. She instantly fell in love with the resounding tones, playing a simple rhythm brought her great joy. Debe is a fabulous photographer and artist, as well as a cancer survivor. She was leaving the next day to fly to Maine, where she was to **conduct art workshops at a weeklong retreat for those with cancer**. She told me she MUST take the drum, pleading because this instrument would bring peace and comfort to the attendees. She shipped it from California to Maine that day and informed me upon her return that the participants absolutely LOVED playing the Moyo Drum.

*“I set it up in the day room and people would come by and play. We also used it in the evenings, during meditations and even when we had a small introductory drumming circle. Everyone loved it. They called it the ‘trance drum.’”*

Last year my friend Grace Powell purchased a Moyo Drum to take to an **assisted living facility**. The facility cares for patients who have experienced strokes and Alzheimer’s disease. She reports:

*“Once the residents believed that the drum was virtually indestructible, they felt free to play it-or bang it-or attack it. If I had a dozen drumsticks, they would play a symphony ...or a cacophony! I take it to Premier Care once or twice a month and it’s always a hit (no pun intended). Several times we have had simple round singings, and the drum helps everyone keep a syncopated beat.*

*Some of the residents fantasize that they are Gene Krupa’s clone and play solos. The rhythmic ‘playing’ motion, regardless of the resulting sound patterns, is incredibly therapeutic. If a regular beat is established, it is even more beneficial. Everyone enjoys the drum, whether or not they actually play.”*

The Moyo Drum is also a wonderful accompaniment for reading poetry. Because I teach **expressive writing classes at a hospital**, poetry is often shared. Recently I took this instrument to class and played softly while students read their work. The result was incredible and so was the level of excitement amongst the students! A sense of peace and wonder together was evident.

I often take the Moyo Drum to a **monthly poetry reading** in Palm Springs. This group had never considered playing an instrument while reading. And to hear this unusual melodic drum...they were stunned. Playing “beside” poetry or prose is now a well requested part of the reading.

Many **stroke survivors** enjoy playing the Moyo...they are able to play delightful music with very little effort. The Moyo drum can even be played with one hand.

The Moyo Drum often “shows up” in my **Native American flute circle class**. I have written the note on each tongue (there are eight) with black marker to make playing with a Native American Flute very easy. I post a chart with the Native American Flute key and the notes to be played on the Moyo. By following a pattern that includes the major triads, the flute and drum create an incredible combination. It doesn’t matter the pattern; the easier the better. Other percussion instruments can also be added, involving more participants to create harmonious music.

**Pentatonic Key of NA Flute**

Gm flute  
Dm flute  
Em flute  
Fm flute  
Cm flute  
Am flute

**Play these notes on Dm Moyo drum, any rhythm**

G, D (B is part of major triad but is not on drum)  
D, F, A  
E, G, (B is part of major triad but is not on drum)  
F, A, C  
C, E, G  
A, C, E



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