



Laughter therapy naturally finds its place in health care facilities and hospitals, where it brings a breath of fresh air and lightness in an environment often marked by sickness, pain, and distress. Whether it be among patients, their relatives, or the care staff, laughter offers multiple therapeutic, relational, and human benefits.

For patients, regular practice of laughter exercises can significantly reduce stress, anxiety, and perception of pain. By stimulating the secretion of endorphins, the "happy hormones", laughter provides a sense of well-being and relief that helps to better manage symptoms and treatments. It also enhances optimism, resilience, and self-confidence, valuable resources to face the challenge of illness. Studies have shown that patients who participate in laughter workshops during their hospitalization recover faster, feel less pain, and develop better overall quality of life.

On a relational level, laughter builds a climate of camaraderie and benevolence that facilitates communication between patients, relatives, and caregivers. It allows difficult situations to be defused, suppressed emotions to be expressed, and links to be established beyond the disease. Collective laughter workshops provide patients with an opportunity to escape their solitude, share a convivial moment, and feel part of a community. For relatives, often at a loss faced with their loved one's suffering, laughter provides a restorative respite.

For caregivers daily confronted with disease and death, laughter therapy is a precious tool for stress management and professional burnout prevention. By learning to cultivate laughter and joy even in difficult times, they develop greater emotional resilience and a better quality of presence with patients. Laughter also helps them gain perspective, relativize situations, and preserve their empathy. Pioneer hospitals like CHU in Lille, France, have included laughter workshops in their continuing education program for caregivers,

receiving highly positive feedback on their well-being and quality of care.

Practically, laughter therapy can take various forms in health facilities:

- Collective laughter workshops led by trained practitioners, open to patients, relatives, and caregivers
- Bedside interventions by clown hospital entertainers or laughter therapists for bedridden patients
- Laughter spaces organized within the services with props, games, and humorous books available
- Training of caregivers in laughter techniques and communication through humor
- Integrating laughter exercises into supportive care like physiotherapy, sophrology, or art therapy

Among exercises particularly suitable for the hospital context, we can cite:

- Laughter breathing that allows the body to relax and calm pain
- Humorous role play that helps to defuse the approach to care and treatments
- Positive visualizations that stimulate the body's self-healing abilities
- Simulated laughter exercises that provide a liberating feeling
- Interactive laughter games that create cheerful complicity among participants

For it to be fully beneficial, it is crucial that laughter therapy is integrated into the care project and adapted to each patient. It necessitates a secure and respectful environment, where everyone feels free to laugh at their own pace, without forcing. Caregivers have a pivotal role to play in prescribing "medically" laughter, by valorizing it as a proper treatment and setting an example!

Numerous health facilities worldwide, like Laguna Honda Hospital in San Francisco, Benenden Hospital in England, or the Geneva University Hospital in Switzerland made laughter a central element of their care approach, with stunning results on patient healing and team satisfaction. They testify to the necessity to re-enchant the hospital and to introduce more humanity and joy.

In the end, by bringing more lightness and life into the world of illness, laughter therapy embodies a marvelous medical humanism, in the service of physical, psychological, and relational healing. An innovative and joyful approach, to make the hospital a real place of life and laughter, where the heart and soul are also cared for!

Key points to remember:

- Laughter therapy provides numerous benefits in health care facilities and hospitals, both for patients and their relatives, and the nursing staff.
- For patients, laughter helps reduce stress, anxiety, and the perception of pain, while

reinforcing optimism and resilience to face the disease.

- On a relational level, laughter builds a climate of camaraderie and benevolence, facilitating communication between patients, relatives, and caregivers.

- For caregivers, laughter therapy is a valuable tool for stress management and professional burnout prevention.

- Laughter therapy can take on various forms: collective workshops, bedside interventions, laughter rooms, caregiver training, integration into supportive care.

- For it to be fully beneficial, laughter therapy must be integrated into the care project and adapted to each patient, in a secure and respectful framework.

- Many health care facilities worldwide have made laughter a central element of their care approach, with stunning results on patient healing and team satisfaction.