

*Comments from Ryan Conrad, Certified Harp Therapist – Therapeutic Musician:*

The Healing Harp Certification Program at CPMC, led by Portia Diwa, has been truly transformational for me—not only as a musician but also as an individual. As a pedal harpist, I initially had concerns about transitioning exclusively to a small harp with limited strings and musical keys. However, I quickly became a believer in the power and versatility of this beautiful (and portable!) instrument through Portia's guidance and expertise.

For me, the program felt like learning a completely new instrument and a new way of playing. Portia's extensive experience and distilled wisdom from thousands of patient interactions were invaluable. Together we curated the best songs across diverse genres, enhancing my understanding and appreciation of the harp's therapeutic potential for everyone. The curriculum covered a wide range of essential topics, including tone, rhythm, rubato, modes, musicality, and expressiveness, all of which are crucial in harp therapy and patient connection.

Portia's teachings on improvisation, breath work, and therapeutic presence were particularly impactful, allowing me to develop a deeper connection with my music and the patients I served. Her insights into interfacing with the hospital, fostering awareness and cultural sensitivity, embracing non-denominational spiritual reflection, and maintaining self-care and professionalism as a harp therapist were comprehensive and enlightening.

What truly set this program apart was Portia's gentle and accepting approach to teaching. She created a supportive and nurturing environment where I felt comfortable exploring and growing as a harp therapist. Her flexibility regarding hours and didactics was a significant advantage, enabling me to complete the program while working full-time. This flexibility made the program accessible and manageable, ensuring that I could fully immerse myself in the learning process without compromising my other commitments.

In summary, the Healing Harp Certification Program at CPMC, under Portia Diwa's expert leadership, has been a profound and enriching experience for me. It has transformed my musical abilities and deepened my understanding of the harp's therapeutic potential. Portia's wisdom, compassion, and dedication have made this journey unforgettable, and I am immensely grateful for the growth and insights I have experienced. I look forward to serving my community with the great confidence and skill I gained becoming a certified harp therapist.