

The Kids are NOT All Right: Promoting Mental Health in the Music Lesson

Frances Clark Center Webinar

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Tips for modeling wellness in your studio:

1. Never underestimate the power of listening.
2. Share from your own experience.
3. Be solution-focused and help students focus on the things they CAN control, even if they are small.
4. Discuss how music allows for emotional processing. How can we use music to serve others and the community at large?
5. Help students put things in perspective with a Catastrophe Scale.
6. Modify expectations as necessary. "Lean Out."
7. Play a game like "Mental Health Bingo," "assign" affirmations, or use a "question jar" to get students sharing.
8. Utilize improvisation and ensemble playing when possible.
9. Rhythm games using movement or rolling/bouncing balls allows for social engagement and attunement during isolation.
10. Integrate mindful movement, eye exercises for screen fatigue, and breathing exercises into the lesson.

Tips for incorporating self-care into lessons:

1. Check in with students before the lesson. Older students can share how they're doing (an open question), while younger students might share a color or weather pattern.
2. Get grounded before playing. Feel contact points on the bench, relax the body, and breathe together.
3. Pause. Take breaks to stretch, breathe, or talk if needed.
4. Take in the good. Ask students what went well in their performance.
5. Comment with curiosity. Feedback framed as, "I wonder how it would sound if..." keeps it about the music, not the student.
6. Promote body awareness by bringing the whole body into your suggestions.
7. Focus students' attention on one task or suggestion at a time.
8. Allow time and space for dialogue, especially with older students, to provide a sense of ownership and confidence in making their own musical choices.
9. Know your limits. Establish boundaries that work for you, and refer students to professional resources as needed.

For students in crisis

National Suicide Prevention Line: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Crisis Text Line: Text CONNECT to 741741

The Trevor Project Lifeline (LGBTQ): 1-866-488-7386, www.thetrevorproject.org

Black Mental Health Alliance: (410) 338-2642, www.blackmentalhealth.com

Resources

American Psychological Association. "[Stress in America: A National Health Crisis.](#)"

Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress, California Department of Public Health. "[How to Help Students Cope with and Deal with Stress.](#)"

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "[Helping Children Cope.](#)"

Child Mind Institute. "[Supporting Students' Mental Health During COVID-19.](#)"

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National Alliance on Mental Illness. www.nami.org.

National Association of School Psychologists. "[Helping Children Cope with Changes Resulting from COVID-19.](#)"

National Institute of Mental Health. www.nimh.nih.gov.

Thakur, Aditya. "Mental Health in High School Students at the Time of COVID-19: A Student's Perspective." *Journal of American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* 59, no. 12 (December 2020): 1309-1310.

US Department of Health & Human Services. "[Talk About Mental Health: For Educators.](#)"

Van der Kolk, Bessel. *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*. Penguin Books, 2014.

Young Minds. "[Coronavirus: Impact on Young People with Mental Health Needs.](#)"