MUSEL

Music-based
Social
Emotional
Learning
Curriculum

February 18, 2023

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A curriculum to accompany Marie Douglas' *I Am Enough* Suite for wind band

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Contents

Introduction

This social emotional-learning (SEL) curriculum has been developed in cooperation with the California Band Directors Association (CBDA) Social Impact Consortium. The curriculum itself was specifically designed to accompany the two movements of Marie Douglas' *I Am Enough* Suite for wind band. The curriculum includes information for band directors about appreciating the emotional struggles that their students and musicians face. In particular, lessons include ways to talk to students about their emotions, music-based exercises to help explore emotions, and music (and non-music) coping strategies to decrease emotional intensity. The purpose is not to have directors diagnose or treat their band members' mental health concerns. Instead, the goals are to help band directors support their musicians' mental wellness and direct them to the appropriate resources.

Curriculum Development

Initial ideas for the curriculum were laid out during preliminary discussions with Dr. Kaitlin Bove, CBDA DEIA[1] Representative. Points covered included the history of the CBDA Social Impact Consortium program, the need for music educator-centered SEL curricula, and the format for the curriculum. Following these discussions, meetings with composer Marie Douglas were held to talk about the compositional elements of her *I Am Enough* Suite and the accompanying vignettes which provide a narrative for both movements. Discussion focused on understanding the underlying psychological processes of the youth (Jace and Elena) around whom the movements were written. Some of this material was musically integrated into the movements themselves.

The next phase of curriculum development involved interviewing band directors who participated in the commissioning of the CBDA Social Impact Consortium piece. Over 40 band directors were contacted and, among those who agreed to participate, were individually interviewed by a team of graduate-level music therapy students from University of the Pacific. These board-certified music therapists had experience working in music, school, and mental health settings and focused these interviews on what the band directors would like to see in the accompanying SEL curriculum. Interview transcripts were analyzed, and broad categories of need were identified. Results revealed that the band directors wanted the curriculum to include:

- Information on better understanding some of the emotional struggles their students/band members experience;

- Techniques and language that can be used to start/engage students/band members in a conversation about difficult emotions;

- Ways music could be used to help students/band members explore their feelings (e.g., through music performance, experimentation, and improvisation);

- Self-care strategies that students/band members could use to regulate emotions; and

- A toolbox of resources.

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[1] Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

The resulting curriculum consists of this introductory material and two units, each containing four lessons. Each unit corresponds to the two movements of Douglas' *I Am Enough* Suite, with the first unit focusing on fear/anxiety and the second on sadness/grief. The material is presented within a psychoeducational[2] framework and the ideas about emotions, emotion regulation, and self-care are drawn from behavioral, cognitive behavioral, and Dialectical Behavior Therapy approaches. Additionally, material has been drawn from music psychology, sociomusicology, neuroscience, and music therapy and integrated into the lessons. When possible, portions of the curriculum tie directly with the movements from *I Am Enough* and the corresponding vignettes of Jace and Elena. Each lesson contains educational information about emotions, their regulation, and the connection to music. Some lessons include strategies to explore and regulate emotions, many of which are tied to music and related NAfME Music Standards.

George Miller (1969), serving as president of the American Psychological Association, gave an impassioned speech on the merits of "giving psychology away." The idea is that psychological science should be openly shared to the benefit of society. This means integrating what we have learned about psychology into our daily lives – at school, work, and home – as opposed to keeping it behind a mysterious, academic firewall. More recently, Evans (2020) identified three ways of carrying out the promise of "giving psychology away": Showing how psychological science can be applied to solve problems; Promoting psychological literacy by helping people understand psychological principles and their application; and Helping people recognize when psychological science benefits society. This curriculum is one form of "giving psychology away" as it: helps band directors connect the dots between psychological science and their band members' mental wellness; educates band directors about emotions, their purpose, and how to regulate them; and points to the relevant research and resources that band directors can use to enhance the ecology of their band programs.

To reiterate, the purpose of the curriculum is not to supplant the services of mental health professionals in the schools. Instead, the hope is to help band directors support their band members' mental wellness and create an even more welcoming community where emotions like fear and sadness are normalized.

Using the Curriculum

The curriculum is flexible, and lessons (and parts of lessons) can be used in isolation from the rest of the curriculum. It is recommended, however, that the curriculum be read in its entirety before using it because concepts introduced in the first unit are reintroduced and elaborated on in the second. Some users may find portions of the curriculum more useful than others. For example, a band director may find the discussion on effectively speaking to a student about their fear more useful than the square breathing exercise. Band directors are also encouraged to apply some of the concepts and exercises to themselves. For example, one may find the use of an iso mood playlist helpful to regulate emotions – and it may be helpful to have used the technique before teaching others to try it. Readers are asked to take from this curriculum what they believe will help them and their band programs the most.

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[2] An approach involving structured and didactic dissemination of knowledge and skills related to mental health and wellness.

Throughout the curriculum there are reminders that this is not a diagnostic and treatment manual and that the information and exercises contained herein do not supplant the work of school mental health personnel. Therefore, users are encouraged to meet and discuss the curriculum with their administrators and school mental health providers before implementing it. They may offer direction on how to implement parts of the curriculum appropriately. This may also provide an opportunity for collaboration between band programs and school counselors, psychologists, and other student support staff.

Before You Get Started

As mentioned above, before implementing this curriculum, users are encouraged to discuss the curriculum and its contents with school administrators and school health and mental health providers. It is also important to identify mental health resources in the school (and district) and understand the protocols for reporting student behavior which may be a sign of a serious mental disorder. The following questions may help guide the conversation:

- What mental health services are available to students?
- In what ways are mental health and wellness topics being discussed in the school?
- What roles do school counselors, psychologists, or other staff play in supporting the mental health needs of students?
- How have recent events or incidents in the school or around the community impacted the students' mental health?
- What problems associated with alcohol or other drug use are present in the school or community?
- How do you see students' families playing a role in their children's mental health and wellness?

Regarding this last point, users are encouraged to communicate with band members' families about the curriculum and involve them in discussions around the topics and exercises contained herein.

Additional Resources
- How to help kids understand and Manage their Emotions (American Psychological Association): https://www.apa.org/topics/parenting/emotion-regulation
- *Music Education and Social Emotional Learning: The Heart of Teaching Music* (S. Edgar, Lake Forest University)
- *Teacher's Resource - Talking About Mental Illness: A Guide for Developing an Awareness Program for Youth* (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health): https://www.camh.ca/-/media/files/guides-and-publications/tami-teachers-guide.pdf
- *Teaching Music with Heart:* Portraits of Music Education and Social Emotional Learning (S. Edgar, Lake Forest University)

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Unit 1: Fear

Vignette: Jace

My alarm clock woke me out of an angelic sleep. Who knows how many times I 'd hit snooze? "Oh no!…"Am I late?"…"I can NOT be late again!!"…"I was doing so good being on time last month!"…"Principal Evans is going to be so disappointed!!!"…"Iiiiiii'm just going to stay home. No walk of shame for me!"…"OMG, it's so hot suddenly…."…."Okay I have to calm down". I closed my eyes and sank with my back to the wall, down to my plushy carpet and remembered the affirmations my great aunt taught me. I begin to say them aloud, "I Can Only Do So Much, It's Okay To Cut Myself Some Slack. I Can Take Life At My Own Pace, I Don't Have To Rush. My Mistakes Don't Define Me, Everyone Makes Mistakes. I Am In Charge Of How I Feel And I Feel To Choose Happiness. I AM ENOUGH!" Calm washed over me eventually, like it always does. A few minutes passed and I realized I felt much better. I went to school late. The day wasn't so bad. I showed up anyway. Did the opposite of what anxiety wanted. I won this time.

Vignette Discussion: Jace

Fear is an important emotion because it communicates that we should be "cautious" or "watch out!" In fact, one could argue that were it not for fear human beings wouldn't exist and would have fallen victim to predators long ago. And while fear can motivate and protect us, it can also get in the way.

For Jace, it is easy to assume that this is not the first time they have been late for school or failed to wake up to their alarm. What we don't know is what consequences led up to this moment or what physical symptoms (e.g., increased pulse, sweaty hands, or shortness of breath) they may have. Given the paralyzing nature of their response (racing thoughts, contemplating not going to school to evade the "walk of shame," closing his eyes, sliding down the wall) one might say they're experiencing anxiety – which is the dysregulated form of fear.

Unlike fear, anxiety fails to communicate clearly and tells us to be "cautious" and "watch out" for everything. Further, anxiety motivates us to find ways to avoid or reduce the racing thoughts or unpleasant physiological symptoms that accompany it. For Jace, the urge to stay home from school may have served that purpose. Luckily for Jace, they have a supportive aunt who has coached and encouraged them to use soothing affirmations, i.e., self-statements which both distract the mind and motivate the person to act (as opposed to avoid). These seem to have done the trick and Jace found themself heading to school. Alternatively, had Jace decided to "let anxiety win" and stay at home, his brain wouldn't learn that they can manage fear and carry on with the day.

Overview

In this unit, lessons will involve:

- Defining the emotion of fear and differentiating it from anxiety.
- Understanding fear and describing it physically, cognitively (i.e., using thoughts), and musically.
- Learning how to regulate the experience of fear using musical examples through composition and improvisation.
- Teaching strategies to manage fear (and other emotions) using music strategies (i.e., musical affirmations and square breathing).

Lesson 1.1: What is fear?

1. Goals

- Students will explain the role fear plays in our lives and differentiate it from anxiety.

- Students will describe how fear can motivate but also stop us from achieving goals or performing.

- Students will describe how they experience fear in terms of their body sensations, thoughts, and behaviors.

- Students will analyze musical examples and explain how the emotion of fear is portrayed with regard to the structural elements[3] (e.g., dynamics, harmony, instrumentation, etc.) and referential elements of music.

2. Relevant Standards

- MU:Cr2.1.C.Ib: Identify and describe the development of sounds or short musical ideas in drafts of music within simple forms (such as one-part, cyclical, or binary).

- MU:Cr2.1.C.Ia: Assemble and organize sounds or short musical ideas to create initial expressions of selected experiences, moods, images, or storylines.

3. Overview of Fear

All emotions are important because they serve a function in our lives. For example, fear communicates that we should be cautious and be careful. In essence, the purpose of fear is to keep us safe. Therefore, it is important to emphasize that mental wellness and mental health do not involve the *elimination* of fear but, instead, the *regulation* of fear.

Generally speaking, a fear response results in the activation of the sympathetic nervous system. This involves an increase in pulse (heart rate), increased respiration, pupil dilation, and blood moving to the extremities (arms and legs). All of this serves to get the body ready to act and avoid danger.

In addition to keeping us safe, fear can sometimes motivate us towards a certain course of action. For example, fear of embarrassment may motivate us to practice before a performance or fear of failure may provoke us to study before an exam. Fear should not, however, be the first or only thing that motivates us. Those who use fear as the only way to motivate may run into problems. In particular, fear is limited in its capacity to motivate effectively in the long term because it imposes physiological and psychological stress on the person and may engender avoidance or resentment (as opposed to motivation) (Belcher et al., 2022; Putwain & Remedios, 2014).

While fear communicates "caution," anxiety (which is a dysregulated form of fear) fails to communicate clearly. So, instead of encouraging someone to "be careful" or "watch out" for something in particular,

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[3] *Structural music elements* refer to specific acoustic phenomena in music which include (but are not limited to): dynamics, harmony, instrumentation, melody, meter, rhythm, tempo, and tonality. These are distinguished from *referential music elements* which include memories, images, or other (non-acoustic phenomena) which are brought about through music. These terms will be used throughout this curriculum.

anxiety is less specific (i.e., "watch out for everything") and global (i.e., "be careful all of the time"). In either case, both fear and anxiety can lead to a number of actions, namely hiding, avoiding, and running.

NOTE: You are not providing therapy or treatment: instead, the information and exercises described below should be used to work with students more effectively. In all cases, if a student is struggling in some way you are encouraged to contact your school's mental health intervention or support team.

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4.   The Actions of Fear

Emotions make us want to behave or act in certain ways. Fear is associated with the actions of *hiding*, *avoiding*, or *running*. In essence, these behaviors function to get away from that which is causing fear. When you think about why people behave the way they do when they are scared this makes functional sense. There are times when, in an effort to keep someone safe or to ensure someone's physical or psychological wellbeing, it is important to hide, avoid, or run. In these cases, fear is justified because the emotion fits the facts or circumstances.

Alternatively, there are situations which may bring about a fear response, yet there is no threat to life or well-being; one may argue, therefore, that fear is not justified. An example might be giving a presentation or performing. The physiological arousal is understandable (i.e., increased heart rate, sweaty palms, etc.) but hiding, avoiding, or running are not only unjustified but may cause more problems.

Further, when fear is unjustified (i.e., the emotion doesn't fit the facts or situation), giving fear what it wants (i.e., hiding, avoiding, or running) can make the fear larger and more difficult to manage. Looking back at Jace, they were experiencing a fear response, yet they were able to do the *opposite* of what the fear wanted them to do: instead of avoiding (staying home from school) they went to school and used self-affirmations to get them there. Had they given fear what it wanted (avoid) it is likely the fear would have increased and made it more difficult to resist the urge to avoid in the future.

Freezing is another action associated with fear. This action is often an initial response to an unexpected stimulus or situation, and some argue that it is an adaptive response allowing the person to "stop, look, and listen" (Bracha, 2014, p. 679).

5.   Talking About Fear

The Stigma of Fear: It can be difficult to talk about fear, in part, because there's a stigma attached to being afraid. In some cases, students may not recognize the emotion they are experiencing as fear because it shares some characteristics with other primary emotions. Occasionally, the expression of fear may look more like sadness (e.g., when someone avoids or withdraws from a situation) or anger (e.g., the "fight" response when someone cannot escape a situation). And still, people can experience more than one emotion at a time: feeling sadness when one is worried about an outcome of an audition or anger because someone feels trapped and unable to escape.

What "Stops" You? Because fear is associated with the actions of avoiding, hiding, and running, it can be helpful to talk about what "stops" a student from doing something. In the case of Jace, a teacher might ask, "What do you think stops you from heading to school?" It would seem easier to talk about "what stops you" rather than "what are you afraid of" because: 1) It avoids the stigma of talking about fear; and 2) It focuses on the action of fear rather than the emotion. And while it is important to understand the origins of someone's fear (defer this responsibility to a counselor or mental health professional), a

student may find it supportive when a teacher acknowledges that they are struggling by focusing on what you (the teacher) are seeing: "I've noticed that you haven't been attending rehearsals recently and I'm wondering what's getting in the way of you coming."

Fear is Normal: It is also important to frame fear as a normal emotion, even though we'd prefer not to experience it more than is necessary. This means we should avoid "pathologizing" a normal emotion, i.e., treating it as something that is abnormal or unhealthy. It is helpful to remind students (and ourselves) that fear communicates that we should be careful or cautious and, in small amounts, can motivate us to change (usually in an effort to rid ourselves of fear). So, fear can be useful.

Fear becomes a problem when it stops us from living our lives as we would like to or meeting our goals. For Jace, it seems that fear was stopping them from going to school, convincing them to hide or avoid. This would inevitably lead to more problems: falling behind in school, getting into trouble with school administration, or disappointing their parents. Further, the more Jace "avoids," the bigger the fear can become and that might lead to guilt and shame (other emotions which contain elements of fear). As mentioned before, anxiety can be viewed as dysregulated fear in which someone may avoid or run away from many aspects of their lives: avoiding school or work, avoiding social contacts, and not taking care of oneself (not eating, sleeping, or exercising). When you are concerned about how fear and anxiety appear to be stopping a student in this way it may be time to consult with school counselors or mental health personnel. In particular, look for sudden changes in students' behaviors or performance.

Validating: Jace may also find it easier to talk to someone about their fear if they are feeling validated. Validation involves communicating to someone that what they are doing, saying, and feeling makes sense, given their situation. For Jace, simply saying, "Yeah, I can see why you're worried, especially with Principal Evans keeping an eye on you" or "It makes sense that you'd want to stay home from school, given how you're feeling." This communicates that "you get it" and when people feel heard, they may be more open to listening or trying something new. It is important to note that by validating Jace you are not *approving* of staying home from school; instead, you're letting them know that you have made a connection between their feeling, the circumstances, and their action (or urge). Other validation strategies might include:

- Ensure that conversations about private events/circumstances are being held in places where others cannot overhear what is being shared. By doing this, you communicate to the student that what they have to say is important and convey respect for their feelings and privacy.

- Try "listening louder than you speak" by refraining from asking questions, interjecting ideas, or offering solutions. If you feel the need to respond, try using subtle listening cues or behaviors, like: nodding, saying "mm-hmm," and making eye contact.

- Lean into the conversation both physically (by orienting your body towards the student) and conversationally (by asking for more information).

- Reflect back the emotion you believe the student is expressing (which can be accomplished by imagining how *you* would feel in the same or similar situation): "That sounds tough" or "I think I would be worried too."

- Acknowledge the effort or the courage it may have taken for a student to share something difficult with you: "I'm glad you felt you could tell me about that" or "It takes strength to share something that causes pain."

6. Analyzing Emotions: Fear

Another way to talk about fear is to think about how fear is experienced, i.e., how does fear affect our bodies, thoughts, and actions. This approach can be helpful for students who are trying to figure out what emotion (in this case, fear) they are experiencing. The following structure can be one way of carrying on a discussion about how fear affects us:

1. Present the emotion for discussion: *fear*

2. Draw three columns on the board, each labeled: Body, Mind, and Behavior (Table 1.1.1).

3. Explain what information will go under each of the columns:

   - *Body*: "Think about what your body feels like when you are feeling fear, worried, or nervous. Focus on things like your muscles, your stomach, or your body sensations."

   - *Mind*: "What thoughts go through your mind when you're feeling fear? Be as specific as you can or imagine being able to read your thoughts as one could in a "thought bubble" in a comic strip."

   - *Behavior*: "If I saw you feeling fear, what would I see you doing or hear you saying? If I wouldn't see you doing anything, imagine what the fear is *urging* you to do."

4. Taking one column at a time, make a list of body sensations, thoughts, and behaviors that are associated with fear.

5. After completing the lists, engage in a conversation:

   - "In what ways could these things motivate us?"

   - "How could these things possibly get in our way or stop us from performing or achieving what we want?"

   - "What types of things do you do to counteract these (body sensations, thoughts, or behaviors)?" (Elicit a discussion about coping skills.)

Table 1.1.1

Analyzing Emotions: Fear

Body	Mind	Behavior
Muscle tension	"This shouldn't be happening."	Running
Shaking	"What am I going to do now?"	Hiding
Sweating	"I better get out of here before something bad happens."	Avoiding
Shortness of breath		Freezing
Fast heartbeat	"Is this really happening right now?"	Speaking quickly or nervously
Stomach aching, rumbling, upset		Being unable to speak

7. Analyzing Emotions in Music: Fear

Emotions are also represented in music and can be another vector for talking about fear. Juslin (2013), for example, described how emotional content is conveyed through musical structures and how it can be used to help us better understand emotions, both basic and complex. Listen to the second movement of *I Am Enough* and have students identify musical phrases, instrumentation, or articulations which represent fear. Use the following table as a way to structure the analysis (Table 1.1.2):

Table 1.1.2

Analyzing Emotions in Music: Fear

Structural Element	Description	Excerpt from the Music
Dynamics	(e.g., multiple changes, subito forte, *sfz*, *fortissimo*)	
Harmony	(e.g., frequent use of dissonance)	
Instrumentation (incl. tone)	(e.g., extreme tessituras, multiple instruments)	
Melody	(e.g., rising pitches, intervallic leaps)	
Meter	(e.g., changing or compound meters)	
Rhythm	(e.g., repeated or irregular rhythmic patterns)	
Tempo	(e.g., fast tempo, changing tempos)	
Tonality	(e.g., modulations, minor keys/modes [Dorian, Phrygian, and Locrian])	

Waldon et al. (2023). *MUSEL: Music-based social emotional learning curriculum.* Conservatory of Music, University of the Pacific. (2/18/23)

Consider using the discussion questions listed below as a follow-up to both of the analyses (Analyzing Emotions: Fear and Analyzing Emotions in Music: Fear). The objective is to draw connections between the personal experience of fear and musical representations:

- "How are your experiences of fear (body, mind, and behavior) related to how Marie Douglass represented fear in her piece, *I Am Enough*?"

- "Which musical elements do you think best represent the emotion of fear? What makes you say that?"

- "What excerpt from the piece do you believe portrays fear in a particularly accurate way?"

- "Which (body sensations, thoughts, or urges to act) did you notice while listening to *I Am Enough*? What excerpt(s) from the piece brought that on?"

8. Additional Learning Activities and Discussions
   - Elicit music-based situations (e.g., auditions, rehearsals, lessons, or performances) when fear might be experienced. Discuss what the students feel with regard to body, mind, and behavior. Ask about how the fear could motivate versus "get in the way" (or stop them) in those situations.

   - Have students share music selections from their own collection which they believe represent the emotion of fear. Using Table 1.1.2, have the students conduct an analysis of those pieces to share in small or large groups.

   - Have students compose or improvise short musical ideas which contain compositional elements which represent the emotion of fear. As a follow up, have students conduct an analysis of the piece or performance using Table 1.1.2.

9. Resources
   - Anxiety: Helping Handout for School and Home (National Association of School Psychologists): https://www.nasponline.org/x55114.xml
   - The Elements of Music (Western Michigan University): https://wmich.edu/mus-gened/mus150/Ch1-elements.pdf
   - Musical affect and embodiment: Fear, threat, and danger in the music of The Lord of the Rings (Conference Paper)

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Lesson 1.2: Regulating Fear

1. Goals

- Students will describe how to reduce vulnerability to dysregulated fear/anxiety.

- Students will keep track of their physical self-care using the PLEASE Skills log.

- Students will demonstrate how to "act opposite" to fear in a musical way and describe the experience.

2. Relevant Standards

- MU:Cr3.2.C.Ia Share music through the use of notation, performance, or technology, and demonstrate how the elements of music have been employed to realize expressive intent.

- MU:Pr4.3.C.Ia Develop interpretations of works based on an understanding of the use of elements of music, style, and mood, explaining how the interpretive choices reflect the creators' intent.

> **NOTE:** Emotion regulation applies across all emotions and is being presented here as it relates to the case of Jace and the regulation of fear (and anxiety).

3. Overview of Emotion Regulation: Fear

As much as we want to avoid experiencing it, fear in life (as with all emotions) is inevitable. The idea is not to eliminate fear entirely; instead, it is important to regulate fear so that it doesn't stop us from doing what we want or need to do. Because of the inevitability of emotions and the possibility of dysregulation (i.e., an intense emotional state wherein it becomes difficult to regulate thoughts and actions) it is important to talk about emotion regulation.

Emotion Regulation Basics: Emotion regulation involves: (1) reducing vulnerability to extreme emotions; (2) managing behavior/responses during intense emotional situations; and (3) altering thoughts, feelings, and behaviors to return to a regulated emotional state (Gross, 2015). Regulating emotions isn't always easy and there are probably times when you are better at it than others. This leads to the first point about reducing vulnerability to dysregulated emotions.

You may have noticed that there are times when it is easier to manage your thoughts and actions; these tend to be times when we've gotten good sleep, eaten well, or are in good health. This would seem to suggest that one's physical health plays an important role in how we experience and express emotions (Bell et al., 2019). The opposite would also appear true: When we haven't been sleeping well, eating well, or feeling well we're less able to manage worrying and we're more vulnerable to hiding, avoiding, or running. This means that an effective self-care regimen should involve the monitoring and maintenance of physical health, eating, sleeping, and exercise, all of which can be accomplished using the PLEASE Skills.

Although emotions, like fear, serve an important purpose and communicate important information, when they interfere with functioning it may be important to reduce their intensity or change the emotion altogether. While there are a number of strategies that can be used, Opposite Action (Linehan, 1993, 2015) addresses the *behavioral* component of an unwanted emotion to change it. As reviewed earlier (The Actions of Fear), there is an action tied to every emotion. When someone acts in concert

with that emotion (e.g., with Jace avoiding school) the fear may intensify. However, by acting in opposition to fear (e.g., going to school) the fear will begin decreasing. This technique is only successful, however, when the emotion is not justified (i.e., the emotion doesn't fit reality or the facts).

> **NOTE:** You are not providing therapy or treatment: instead, the information and exercises described below should be used to work with students more effectively. In all cases, if a student is struggling in some way you are encouraged to contact your school's mental health intervention or support team.

4. PLEASE Skills

A helpful way of regulating emotions – or staving off dysregulation – is by paying close attention to and taking care of the body. According to Linehan (2015), "To build a resilient body, the focus is on balancing nutrition and eating, getting sufficient but not too much sleep…, getting adequate exercise, treating physical illness, and staying off nonprescribed mood-altering drugs" (p. 321). When people are able to make small changes to one of these areas, the results can be far reaching and impact multiple areas of someone's life. One way of keeping track of these is by using the PLEASE Skills (see Appendix A).

The PLEASE Skills (Linehan, 1993, 2015) are five (5) factors which, when not taken care of in advance, can make someone vulnerable to dysregulated thoughts, feelings, behaviors, or symptoms. (NOTE: This version of the PLEASE Skills is adapted from Linehan's Dialectical Behavior Therapy system of psychotherapy). As a skill, you are tasked to manage as many of these factors as possible, thereby reducing vulnerability to dysregulation. The PLEASE Skills are as follows:

Treat **P**hysica**L** Illness

Balance **E**ating

Avoid Drugs

Balance **S**leep

Get **E**xercise

Physical Illness: Treating **physical illness** involves taking care of your body, seeing your doctor when needed, managing chronic health problems, and taking medication as prescribed. When you are sick, in pain, or neglect your overall health, you become susceptible to problems. Treating physical illness isn't the absence of illness – instead, it's the management of illness and maintenance of health.

Eating: Balanced **eating** includes consuming the right types and amounts of food. Unfortunately, a person's diet is one of the first things that become disrupted when we are overwhelmed by stress. However, paying attention to diet puts more control in your hands.

Drugs: **Drugs** include any substance that *has not* been prescribed for *you* OR taking a substance for other than its intended purpose. Specifically, this includes: drinking alcohol; using recreational substances; consuming caffeine; using nicotine; taking someone else's medication; or taking a medication for a purpose other than its intent. When you use substances in these ways you may be relinquishing some control over your thoughts and actions.

Sleep: Getting balanced **sleep** means obtaining enough "quality" sleep while ensuring you are not sleeping too much. What we know is that adults need approximately 7 to 8 hours of sleep nightly to maintain physiological balance ([National Sleep Foundation](#)). While there is always variation from person to person, generally, the older you are the *less* sleep you require. For example: Young children (1 to 5 years) should obtain between 11 to 14 hours of sleep; school age children (6 to 13 years) are recommended to get 9 to 11 hours of quality sleep; and teens should receive 8 to 10 hours of sleep. While too little sleep is problematic, so too is getting too much sleep. In fact, excessive sleep duration may be the sign of a health problem. Further, sleep can be used as a type of *hiding* or *avoiding* which may intensify fear. Hence, this PLEASE Skill is called *balanced* sleep.

Exercise: **Exercise** refers to engaging in light to moderate physical activity (around 20 to 30 minutes each day). Some evidence suggests that exercise encourages retention and production of endogenous (i.e., naturally occurring) mood enhancing chemicals, suggesting that you can help your brain stave off negative[4] emotional states by *moving* (Esch & Coburg, 2010). It may also take your mind off of worries, increase opportunities for socializing, and improve your sense of confidence.

Engaging in vulnerability-reducing activities, like those of the PLEASE Skills, will not eliminate negative emotions (e.g., fear, sadness, or anger). Instead, using these strategies reduces the likelihood of dysregulation and increases someone's ability to manage emotional events *when* they happen.

5. Acting Opposite

Other ways of managing unwanted or negative emotions may involve changing your beliefs about a situation, finding meaning in a painful event, or through acceptance. However, these techniques require time and the skills of an experienced mental health provider to carry out effectively. Like the PLEASE Skills, the skill of Opposite Action was also developed by Linehan (1993, 2015) as part of a system of psychotherapy called Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT). And while the DBT skill of Opposite Action is another that should be carried out by a mental health professional, the premise of the technique may be helpful when supporting students who are struggling with troubling emotions.

There are a few assumptions related to acting opposite. First, every emotion has a corresponding action. As reviewed earlier, the actions associated with fear are avoid, hide, and run. The idea is that every emotion urges us to act in a certain way. Next, when you act in concert with the emotion the emotion tends to intensify. So, in the case of fear, hiding when you are fearful results in an increase (particularly in the long-term) in fear. It's almost as if the unwanted emotion tries to convince you to act in ways that will ensure it sticks around. Finally, acting in a way that is *opposite* to what the emotion wants may have the effect of reducing the intensity of, or changing, the emotion.

In Jace's situation, fear was trying to convince them to stay home from school (hide and/or avoid) which likely would have resulted in an intensification of fear over time. Instead, Jace engaged in the *opposite action* and went to school. And while it may not have been easy – and their fear probably increased the moment they stepped on campus – the long term result is that Jace learned that the fear, although understandable, was ultimately not justified (i.e., the fear did not fit the facts). And doing the opposite

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[4] *Negative* refers specifically to emotional states that are unwanted, unpleasant, or interfere with overall functioning or our achieving our goals. It does not necessarily mean that emotions like fear, sadness, or anger are always negative (or bad). The *negative* is simply being used to describe emotions that interfere with our lives.

action likely helped them avoid consequences like falling behind in classes, getting into trouble with parents/school administration, and missing out on socializing with friends.

As a teacher, think about how an emotion like fear may get in the way of their ability to get the most out of playing music or attending school. First, consider the ways in which fear may be convincing them to hide, avoid, or run. Do they miss rehearsals or come late to class? Do they fail to practice or come unprepared? Do they avoid eye contact or seem distracted (or disinterested)? Maybe they are struggling with playing parts or don't understand something. It may be easier for them to hide or avoid rather than face the (unjustified *but* understandable) embarrassment of asking for help. What would it be like to encourage the student to act *opposite* of what fear is telling them to do? For example, urge them to ask for help even when fear is trying to convince them to silently struggle. Or maybe they are grappling with something outside of music which is interfering with their ability to practice. In this case they may be reluctant to disclose what's going on for fear of disappointing you. The opposite action for the student would be to share what's happening at which point it *may* be appropriate to consult with school support services (e.g., school counselor).

6. Regulating Emotions with Music: Fear

Music can be used to explore emotions because it can symbolically represent different emotional states (Thaut, 2005). As discussed earlier (Analyzing Emotions in Music: Fear), different combinations of musical elements can be used symbolically to depict expressions of fear. By listening to or playing musical excerpts that represent fear, students may feel freer to examine, discuss, or explore fear because it is somehow *outside* of them. The following exercise involves: identifying musical excerpts (as short as a measure or two) which illustrate fear; discussing how the excerpt is composed to represent fear; playing through the excerpt; and adjusting structural music elements to depict a transition to calm.

1. Looking through the score of the second movement of Marie Douglas' *I Am Enough*, identify a short excerpt which represents fear.

2. Discuss how the excerpt is composed in a way to depict Jace's fear. In particular, look at Douglas' use of dynamics, harmony, instrumentation (including playing articulations), melody, meter, rhythm, and tempo.

3. Play through the excerpt multiple times to acquire an understanding of how the compositional elements are used to express fear.

4. Looking back at the score, think about how those structural elements could be *recomposed* to lessen the depiction of fear. Discuss how changing one element (e.g., decreasing dynamic levels or slowing the tempo) may decrease the intensity of the emotional expression.

5. Play through these *recompositions* and discuss how the emotional experience was different.

6. With these compositional ideas in mind, alternate between the original version of the excerpt and the *recomposed* excerpt. Pay attention to your own emotional response to what you are playing and hearing.

7. Try improvising short passages of your own, alternating between high and low expressions of fear.

7. Additional Learning Activities and Discussions
   - Have students make a list of situations in their lives when they are more vulnerable to dysregulated thoughts, feelings, or behaviors.

   - Lead a discussion about how taking care of one's physical health (PLEASE Skills) is important for the life of a musician and for maintaining mental wellness.

   - Instruct students to keep track of their PLEASE Skills for a week (using Appendix A) and report back about what they find. In particular, have the student look for patterns between eating and sleeping and the relationship with playing, practicing, and rehearsing.

8. Resources
   - How much sleep do you actually need? (National Sleep Foundation): https://www.thensf.org/how-many-hours-of-sleep-do-you-really-need/
   - Students Experiencing Stress (American Psychological Association): https://www.apa.org/ed/schools/primer/stress
   - Why is Emotion Regulation Important? (Psychology Today): https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/emotion-regulation

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APPENDIX A

	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
Date:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
PLEASE Skills							
Physica**L** Illness							
Eating							
Avoid Drugs							
Sleep							
Exercise							

Lesson 1.3: Musical Affirmations

1. Goals

- Students will learn about using affirmations to provide encouragement and rethink situations that seem hopeless.

- Students will identify musical elements (e.g., structural [i.e., tempo, rhythm, melody, etc.] or referential [i.e., memories or images]) which might engender a sense of hope, encouragement, or reassurance.

- Students will identify at least one music selection that can be used as a "musical affirmation."

2. Relevant Standards

- MU:Cr1.1.C.Ia: Describe how sounds and short musical ideas can be used to represent personal experiences, moods, visual images, and/or storylines.

- MU:Pr4.1.C.Ia: Identify and select specific excerpts, passages, or sections in musical works that express a personal experience, mood, visual image, or storyline in simple forms (such as one-part, cyclical, binary).

NOTE: While musical affirmations are being taught within the context of Unit 1, this technique can be applied broadly to any situation that requires it.

3. Overview of Affirmations

Jace used verbal affirmations for reassurance and motivation even when fear was telling them to stay at home and avoid going to school. Affirmations are encouraging statements that help people rethink situations. For example, Jace used "It's okay to cut myself some slack" and "My mistakes don't define me" as ways to reevaluate a situation they saw as hopeless. Most people use these types of "cheerleading" statements without identifying them as a skill: "I can do this" or "This won't be as bad as I expect it to be."

This is not an exercise in self-deception because the affirming statement should be factually true ("I can make mistakes") while self-validating ("I can take life at my own pace"). In composing these encouraging statements, Linehan (2015) writes, "The idea is to talk to yourself as you would talk to someone you care about who is in a crisis – or to talk to yourself as you would like someone else to talk to you" (p. 448). Linehan goes on to say that in preserving the relationship with yourself (i.e., how you treat yourself) it is important to tell yourself more positive things as opposed to negative.

This is probably difficult for many people to do, in part, because our brains are set up to detect errors or pay more attention to things that don't fit. As a result, people tend to focus on errors or things that are wrong. In general, people tend to get more things correct than wrong – so in the spirit of economy, it's more efficient for our brains to focus on errors. However, when people are struggling, *everything* seems negative, and an "injection" of affirmation is needed.

NOTE: You are not providing therapy or treatment: instead, the information and exercises described below should be used to work with students more effectively. In all cases, if a student is struggling in some way you are encouraged to contact your school's mental health intervention or support team.

4. Affirmation Guidelines

What follows are some guidelines for designing and using affirmations:

1. While affirmations themselves are individualized (not a one-size fits all), it is helpful to generate a list of affirmations in a group because others may have ideas that motivate or inspire others.

2. Lists of affirmations are best devised *in advanced* as opposed to trying to come up with a list of affirmations during a crisis.

3. When someone uses affirmations, they aren't denying that things are difficult or that they are ignoring challenges. One way to think about this is to "validate" the perceived challenge and follow it by a truthful reconceptualization of the problem. To do this, it is helpful to write affirmations in "pairs," recognizing the hardship while acknowledging growth or change:

    - "I may not be where I want to be, and I've come a long way."

    - "Things are challenging right now, and I've survived much worse."

    - "This change is difficult, and I've been able to make it through changes before."

    - "I don't like what's happening right now, and I know it won't last forever."

    - "This situation is tough, and I have been preparing to deal with this."

4. Combine an affirmation with an action – particularly an action *opposite* to the emotion you want to change. For example, if fear makes you want to avoid meeting new people or engaging socially, someone might say: "Meeting new people is hard, and I can make it easier if I do it in small steps." Then, commit to it by making eye contact and smiling at people a few times each day.

5. Just like music, using affirmations takes practice. Find time each day to practice either saying these out loud or quietly to yourself. And because this is probably new, it will feel awkward – but the more you do it the less awkward it will feel.

6. Affirmations don't always work – especially in situations where emotions are justified (e.g., someone is really in danger) or if the emotions are intense. That being said, it is important to keep trying: If one affirmation doesn't work, try another one (or several more) from your list.

> **TEACHING TIPS:** Linehan (2015) suggests that modeling this technique (what she refers to as the Distress Tolerance Skill of "Encourage") may be necessary – especially early in the process. Communicate that affirming oneself is not easy (especially when things are tough) and it takes practice. Use examples that musicians might experience (e.g., not passing an audition, worrying about an upcoming performance, or being unprepared for a lesson/rehearsal). These music-based experiences can be used as templates that can be applied to other areas of students' lives.

5. Music and Affirmations

Music can also be used in an affirming way. Shifriss et al. (2015) found that listening to music can help improve mood and increase motivation to change. In a study by de Leeuw et al. (2022), listening to meaningful and pleasurable music also increased motivation as well as a desire for social connection.

Reiter (2019) described a music-based technique called the *Theme Song for Change* which involves selecting a "theme song" which helped listeners identify unrealized, positive personal characteristics.

People, particularly adolescents and young adults, often use music to help form their identities (Clements-Cortés, 2014). Further, Clements-Cortés asserts that music listening is associated with decreases in stress, anxiety, and cortisol (a stress hormone) and increases in energy and happiness. This would seem to suggest that selecting motivational or affirming music may help navigate difficult situations in the short-term.

6. Creating a Repertoire of Musical Affirmations

What may be affirming or motivating to one person may not be for someone else. Consequently, preferences for affirming music will vary from one person to another. It is therefore important for individual students to identify what their affirming musical "tastes" are and assemble a repertoire to use to spark motivation or creativity. It may be helpful for students to examine their personal music libraries and analyze the musical characteristics of selections which could be used to affirm or motivate. Think about it like a personal "theme" or a "fight song." While this should ultimately be done individually, it may be helpful to start the process in large or small groups to acquaint students with the process of analysis. This is another way for students to share their personal affirmations with each other.

The following structure could be used when analyzing pieces:

Piece/Song Title: Firework
Artist/Album: Katy Perry/Teenage Dream
What makes this piece/song affirming or motivational to you? The music itself is energizing and the lyrics affirm that you can bounce back from feeling down. It's energizing but it also acknowledges that times are sometimes tough.
What musical characteristics do you find affirming or motivating?

Structural Elements	**Composer/Artist Intent**	**Referential Elements**
Dynamics: mf to *f*; builds gradually from verse to chorus	*Dynamics:* The intensity builds from the verses (depicting feelings of being lost or being directionless) to the chorus (depicting a sense of letting your talent shine)	*Memory:* It reminds me of a time when I was going for a job interview and I really wanted to get it. This came after a really big disappointment and I was feeling like that "plastic bag, floating in the wind." I knew I had what it takes but was worried that they wouldn't like what I had to offer. I listened to this song over and over again before the interview – reminding myself that I had a lot to offer – I just had to show them what they had in store if they hired me.
Instrumentation: orchestration includes symphonic instruments	*Instrumentation:* The instrumentation is orchestral by design and it supposed to sound grand.	
Lyrics: autobiographical; motivating; affirming	*Lyrics:* The lyrics tell a story about letting your "fireworks" fly even during times when you haven't been feeling at the top	

Waldon et al. (2023). *MUSEL: Music-based social emotional learning curriculum.* Conservatory of Music, University of the Pacific. (2/18/23)

	of your game. Lyrics include words like "shine," "brighter than the moon," "awe, awe, awe," and "boom, boom, boom."	*Imagery:* I imagine fireworks exploding in the night sky – when they explode, fireworks are always a surprise because you don't know what they'll show. I feel like I have a lot of talents that I can surprise people with, like fireworks.
Melody: diatonic (predominantly in verses) and large intervals (fifths and octaves) in the chorus	*Melody:* The chorus is mostly stepwise as the lyrics talk about feeling down or being stressed; parts of the chorus extend into a higher register and interval leaps are composed around the lyrics "Fourth of July" and "shoot."	
Rhythm: there is a consistent eighth note pattern in the accompaniment; the melody is syncopated in places and is distinct from the accompaniment pattern	*Rhythm:* The steady, pulsing texture of the accompaniment is a driving force that pushes the piece through the narrative. The melody is more varied (including some longer note values and syncopation) which help it stand out above the accompaniment (like fireworks).	
Tempo: moderately fast (126 bpm); steady/consistent	*Tempo:* The tempo is intended to be energizing and "igniting."	

Obviously one doesn't need to analyze each piece in a personalized list of musical affirmations; instead, this type of exercise may help students notice which musical characteristics are related to these feelings. Further, students may want to compose brief pieces or create chants that contain these musical characteristics for use as affirmations.

7. Using Affirmations

There are several ways to use musical affirmations – the only limitation is a student's creativity or ingenuity.

Prepare: Make a list of the affirmations ahead of time and (until you know them by heart) ensure that you can access it (e.g., on your phone). If you're using musical affirmations, create a playlist that you can access whenever you need it; you don't want to take time to find those songs if what you really want to do is practice using affirmations. This also means having your Bluetooth speaker or ear-buds available, charged up, and ready to go.

Practice Regularly: Practice affirmations (musical or non-musical) regularly at different points throughout the day. Research suggests that engaging in this type of rehearsal appears to activate the pleasure and reward circuitry in the brain (Dutcher et al., 2016). This is important because repeated

activation of certain brain pathways alters the structures of the brain and strengthens the association between the activity (using affirmations) and the resulting pleasurable/rewarding consequence. And because Salinpoor et al. (2011) showed that listening to intensely pleasurable music activates the same neural networks, it would seem that combining both – music and affirmations – would provide further motivating and mood altering benefits.

Stress Inoculation: Use affirmations as a way to prepare yourself for or cope in advance of a situation that might be difficult. Choose the right affirmation(s) or playlist (or piece/song) and "inoculate" yourself by repeating it over and over. Use it like a "fight song" or a "call to action" to help you muster your resources. This approach to using affirmations is related to Meichenbaum's (2009) *stress inoculation training* wherein someone uses coping strategies in advance of a stressful event to effectively handle that event.

Survive the Moment: Affirmations can also be used much in the way Jace did: using them to make it through a short-term crisis without making it worse (by staying at home). Repeat the appropriate affirmation over and over – or listen to your musical affirmation on repeat until you manifest the determination or motivation you want. Manifestation (often seen as a popular psychology concept) pertains to turning a belief into a reality – and there's science to support this idea as well. Dr. Carol Dweck (2006) writes about the ways in which personal beliefs and attitudes about our abilities can lead to behavior change. Research also supports the important role that self-fulfilling prophecies and expectations can have on outcomes (Jussim, 1986). And the work of both Drs. Fredrickson (2013) and Lyubomirsky (2007) dive into how positive emotions can enhance the capacity for achieving what one wants.

It is worth mentioning that using strategies like affirmations do not solve the problem that may have led to someone's distress. Instead, the strategy is used to survive the moment and reduce short-term distress.

8. Additional Learning Activities and Discussions

- Have students work in small groups to design lists of affirmations that could be used in a variety of contexts: musical, school, social, etc. Then, have groups share them with the larger group and see where there are similarities.

- Identify what musical characteristics (e.g., structural and referential musical elements) can be used to motivate or affirm.

- Use the characteristics above to identify music selections which may be used as a musical affirmation.

- Have students compose or improvise short pieces or chants which incorporate affirming or motivating musical characteristics.

- Have students identify situations where they could use musical affirmations as a form of stress inoculation. Draw on music-related contexts, e.g., performance, auditions, juries, competitions.

9. Resources

- 40 Affirmations for Better Self-care (Kaiser Permanente): https://healthy.kaiserpermanente.org/health-wellness/healtharticle.40-positive-

affirmations#:~:text=The%20word%20%E2%80%9Caffirm%E2%80%9D%20means%20to,or%20before%20you%20fall%20asleep

- Do Positive Affirmations Work? (Cleveland Clinic): https://health.clevelandclinic.org/do-positive-affirmations-work/
- Happiness Helps: Improve Your Mental Health with Positive Affirmations (University of Utah): https://healthcare.utah.edu/healthfeed/postings/2021/01/love-yourself-with-kind-words.php

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Lesson 1.4: Square Breathing

1. Goals

- Students will learn a music-based breathing technique to regulate high emotional arousal (e.g., fear and anxiety).

- Students will describe the structural music elements (e.g., tempo, instrumentation, dynamics, etc.) that support a relaxation response.

- Students will identify examples from public or personal music libraries which may be used to support relaxation.

- Students will compose or improvise simple pieces which may be used to support relaxation.

2. Relevant Standards

- MU: Re7.1.C.Ia: Apply teacher-provided criteria to select music that expresses a personal experience, mood, visual image, or storyline in simple forms (such as one-part, cyclical, binary), and describe the choices as models for composition.

- MU:Re7.2.C.Ia: Analyze aurally the elements of music (including form) of musical works, relating them to style, mood, and context, and describe how the analysis provides models for personal growth as composer, performer, and/or listener

- MU:Pr4.1.C.Ia: Identify and select specific excerpts, passages, or sections in musical works that express a personal experience, mood, visual image, or storyline in simple forms (such as one-part, cyclical, binary).

> **NOTE:** While musical affirmations are being taught within the context of Unit 1, this technique can be applied broadly to any situation that requires it.

3. Overview of Square Breathing

In square breathing (also referred to as "Box Breathing"), music is used to pace and structure breathing into phases (inhalation, holding, exhalation, and holding) in a way that regulates the number of breaths per minute (≈ 5.5/minute) and brings about a relaxation response. The act of increasing the length of the exhale stimulates the vasovagal response which leads to physiological relaxation (i.e., an increase in parasympathetic nervous system activation). The technique has been shown to enhance relaxation among college students (Rajkumar et al., 2021), reduce breathlessness in medical patients (Johnson et al., 2015), and the potential to improve lung function (Ahmed et al., 2021).

> **NOTE:** You are not providing therapy or treatment: instead, the exercise described below should be used to support students with whom you work. In all cases, if a student is struggling in some way you are encouraged to contact your school's mental health intervention team.

4. The Square Breathing Technique

To teach the square breathing technique using music, the first stage involves teaching the basic pattern. Each "breath" involves four phases, and each phase consists of four counts. This roughly translates into 16 beats or, musically speaking, a four-measure phrase in 4/4 meter. The next phase entails

synchronizing the breathing pattern with metrically-appropriate music which also consists of structural music elements which support relaxation.

> **TEACHING TIPS:** This is a good opportunity to explain the role of meter in regulating or accompanying nonmusical behaviors (like breathing). Neurologic music therapists use the structural elements of meter and rhythm to retrain movements like walking for those who have movement disorders (Thaut & Hoemberg, 2014). The key is ensuring that the meter of the music matches the meter of the movement. For square breathing, each phase is four beats and therefore requires 4/4 meter.

5. Square Breathing Pattern

The steps involved in the square breathing pattern are as follows (see Figure 1.4.1):

1. Exhale slowly, emptying all of the air from the lungs.

2. Inhale through the nose for four counts.

3. Hold the breath for four counts.

4. Exhale through the nose for four counts.

5. Hold the breath for four counts (or continue exhaling for four counts).

6. Repeat the pattern (steps 2 through 5) three or more times.

Figure 1.4.1

Square Breathing Pattern
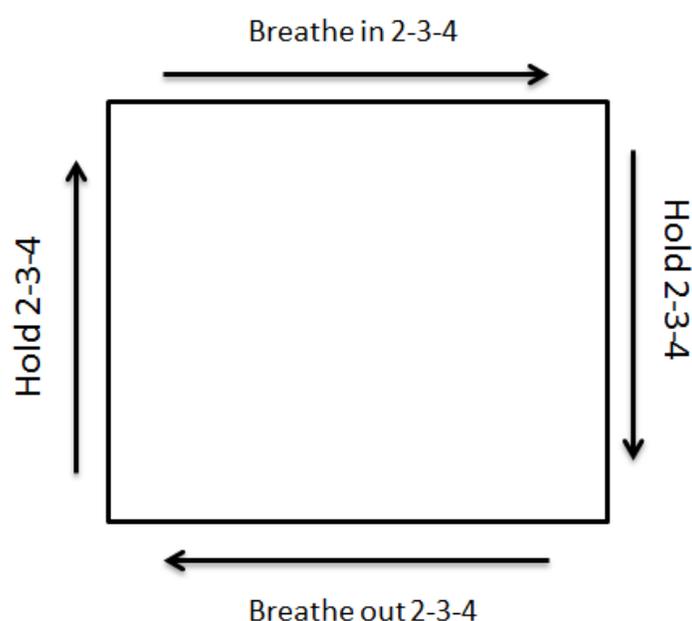
It is helpful to use the following verbal/rhythmic cuing (spoken at a rate of 72 bpm) when teaching the pattern (see Figure 1.2):

Figure 1.4.2

Rhythmic Cuing for Square Breathing Pattern

TEACHING SUGGESTION: Consider breaking up students into sections or smaller groups to practice this independently. Encourage students to take turns conducting and leading the small group.

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6. Selecting Relaxing Music

Music serves a number of functions to support relaxation:

1. Music **blocks environmental sounds** which may otherwise distract someone from concentrating on relaxation.

2. Music **provides a focus for attention** while relaxing. In this case, both the music and the breathing exercises provide something with which one can be "mindful."

3. Music **helps structure relaxation exercises**. Similar to dancing, music provides a "beat" with which to pace breathing (or other relaxation) exercises.

4. Music **cues a relaxation response**. In the same vein as classical conditioning (think Pavlovian conditioning), a stimulus paired repeatedly with a response may eventually occasion an automatic bodily response. When using music for relaxation, playing a specific music selection while relaxing may eventually bring about a relaxation response without the need to engage in the relaxation exercise (e.g., square breathing). The trick is *teaching the mind and body to associate the music with feeling relaxed*. Therefore, if one practices relaxation exercises with music long enough, the body may learn to relax automatically when the music is played. This also means *only* listening to that selection when the intention is to relax.

NOTE: For a technique like this to be most effective, students need to practice square breathing regularly (with or without musical accompaniment). Of particular importance is ensuring that whatever music is selected to accompany square breathing, the music should only be used when relaxing and not to accompany any other activity (e.g., chores, driving, homework). This will strengthen the conditioned association between the music and a relaxation response.

There is a large body of research which has explored musical parameters (i.e., structural music elements) which enhance relaxation. For a detailed analysis, please see Tan et al. (2012) and Wolfe et al. (2002). In general, the following structural music elements have been shown to support a relaxation response:

- **Dynamics:** *mp* or *p*; avoid selections which may be too soft (e.g., *ppp*) or that involve frequent, sudden changes; gradual changes may be acceptable

- **Harmony:** consonant, predictable progressions

- **Instrumentation:** flute, piano, guitar, violin

- **Lyrics:** avoid music with lyrics (this may be distracting) unless it is one performed in a language that the listener does not understand

- **Melody:** stepwise and predictable

- **Meter:** common time as this meter matches the natural breathing pattern

- **Rhythm:** regular, predictable without syncopation

- **Tempo:** 60 to 80 bpm; avoid selections which involve frequent or sudden changes in tempo; rubato may be acceptable as long as it is not extreme or unpredictable

- **Tonality:** major or minor modes (some find minor tonalities relaxing)

Regarding familiarity, there is some research evidence which does suggest that being familiar with a relaxing music selection may be helpful; however, if the selection evokes non-relaxing musical referents (e.g., memories or images) it may not facilitate relaxation. The guiding principle is that the student will be the best judge of what is relaxing, and the above guidelines are just that – general recommendations for helping people identify music to assist with relaxation. Additionally, it is usually most helpful to have students find music from their personal libraries because they are more likely to listen to/use music to which they already have access.

What follows are some music selections which have been used in research and clinical practice to assist relaxation (and can be a good accompaniment to square breathing):

Beethoven, L. (1995). *Moonlight sonata* [Song recorded by C. Arrau]. On *Beethoven at bedtime.* Phillips.

Kobialka, D. (1994). Going home again (from Dvořák's New World Symphony) [Song]. On *Going home again*. Li-Sem Enterprises.

Secret Garden. (1997). *Hymn to hope* [Song]. On *White stones*. Universal.

Williams, V. (1993). Five variants on Dives and Lazarus [Song recorded by the English String Orchestra]. On *Meditations for a quiet dawn*. Nimbus.

7. Putting it Together

After identifying an appropriate music selection to accompany square breathing, the following sequence of steps is suggested:

1. Have students record or offer an indication of their pre-square breathing relaxation level. Students can use a descriptive word, image, or color – but it is easiest to use a scale of 1 ("not at all relaxed") to 10 ("extremely relaxed").

2. Begin playing music and instruct students to pay attention to the tempo and meter of the music.

3. Instruct the students to become aware of their breathing and encourage them to breathe using the diaphragm.

4. One measure before you begin the square breathing, instruct the student to slowly exhale in preparation of the exercise beginning.

5. Begin the square breathing exercise. Repeat it three to four times before having them return to periods of regular breathing without the pattern. Monitor the students and see how they are accommodating to the pattern and limit the number of square breathing trials to accommodate.

6. Before the music ends, instruct the students to return to a typical (non-square breathing) pattern.

7. Have students record or offer an indication of their post-square breathing relaxation level.

8. Instructional Tips

It is best to teach the square breathing pattern without music; this will allow the student to focus more on the sequencing of the steps and allow them to become cognitively and physiologically aware of this decidedly different type of breathing. Some may find it difficult or uncomfortable initially because it is not how humans typically breathe. Here are some additional tips:

- It is ideal if students are breathing in <u>and</u> out through the nose. This simplifies the pattern because one does not need to remember whether they should use their mouth (e.g., during an exhale) which may be cognitively distracting. Additionally, breathing in and out through the nose allows the air to be warmed, moistened, and filtered as it passes through the nasopharynx.

- For those who have nasal congestion or other difficulty breathing through the nose, breathing in and out through the mouth is perfectly acceptable.

- Ensure that students use <u>all four counts</u> when breathing in (as opposed to inhaling completely on the first one or two counts). This will produce less tension while breathing in.

- Similarly, some students may exhale completely over one or two counts. Instead, encourage them to slowly breathe out over four (or more counts). Doing so stimulates the vasovagal response which supports physiological relaxation.

- Some find using the words "wait" or "pause" (instead of "hold") during the second and fourth phases is more effective because the word "hold" creates a sense of psychological tension.

- When breathing, encourage students to use their diaphragm as opposed to their shoulders. This lessens the amount of muscular tension. For more information on diaphragmatic breathing, click here: https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/9445-diaphragmatic-breathing

- It is beneficial for students to begin with some slow inhalations and exhalations a few times whenever using the square breathing pattern. This "warm up" orients them to breathing deeply and exhaling completely.

9. Additional Learning Activities and Discussions

- Listen to and discuss the characteristics of music (e.g., structural music elements) which enhance relaxation.

- Have students share pieces of music from their personal libraries which match the structural music elements associated with relaxation (use Lesson 1.3, Creating a Repertoire of Musical Affirmations as a template for analysis).

- Have small groups of students improvise or compose short pieces (in 4/4 meter) which may be used to accompany the square breathing technique (keeping in mind the structural music characteristics which support relaxation).

- Instruct the class on using the square breathing technique – first without and then with music. Have them rate their subjective level of relaxation before and after square breathing using a scale of 1 ("not at all relaxed") to 10 ("extremely relaxed").

- Practice the square breathing technique at the beginning of class or rehearsals. This can be accomplished by playing recordings (e.g., ones that students share) or designate certain sections in an ensemble to play a relaxing music composition to support other students' relaxation.

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Unit 2: Sadness

Vignette: Elena

Soooo, my ballet instructor told mama that she has to reel me back in from time to time. She says I'm talented but sometimes I don't pay attention, I "drift off". I mean, I really like ballet class, especially when we have recitals, I love to perform, and I love to see my friends. I love my teachers. I guess I just want to learn different dances too. Sometimes I watch YouTube and listen to the songs my aunties play at our cookouts, from when they were kids in Mexico. It sounds like so much fun and it seems more natural for me. I am not going to lie, during our ballet warm up sessions I often get carried away dreaming of a class that teaches Mexican Folkloric dances.

Vignette Discussion: Elena

On the surface, it might appear that Elena has attention problems; reports of "drifting off" or needing to be "reeled back in" are often phrases used by adults who struggle to capture young people's attention. Instead, it appears Elena is longing for something she wants but is not being supported (or delivered) by her parents or ballet instructor. One may ask this question: Is inattention a problem for Elena or for the adults in her world?

If Elena does have attention problems, one would expect inattentiveness to interfere with multiple aspects of her life: concentrating at school, failing to pay attention to details on assignments, forgetting to follow through on tasks (like chores), or being easily distracted in situations requiring attention. So, if the "inattention" is confined to ballet class, it may not be something like ADHD. Further, attention problems are sometimes experienced by people who are feeling anxiety and sadness. Perhaps Elena feels some sadness and loss about not dancing in the tradition of her Mexican heritage. When people feel sad they sometimes withdraw or pull inward which may feel safe or calming. For Elena, using her imagination to dream "of a class that teaches Mexican Folkloric dances" may help her escape the heartache of missing home.

In this analysis, there is a deliberate reconceptualization of Elena's inattention because it is easy to dismiss what we observe using a label: ADHD, laziness, low motivation, unpreparedness, etc. Instead, it may be more helpful to look at how the behavior we see (i.e., *drifting off*) may serve a different purpose for Elena. By exploring what we *assume* to be inattention and being curious about what we see we may learn more about Elena and the loss she feels.

Note, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) can be a significantly impairing condition for children, adolescents, and adults. Inattention, hyperactivity, impulsivity, and a combination of all three sets of symptoms can significantly interfere with a person's ability to attend school, work, socialize, or care for themselves. Unfortunately, research suggests that ADHD is often over diagnosed in children and adolescents which may lead to unnecessary treatment and labeling (Kazda et al., 2021). This also means that those with milder cases, especially those that show primarily inattention, may be misdiagnosed with this disorder when there may be another condition, e.g., depression, which may explain the symptoms. It is this perspective that is being used to understand Elena's story.

Overview

In this unit, lessons will cover:

- Defining sadness and the related concepts of depression and grief
- What sadness communicates
- Ways to regulate sadness
- Teaching music-based strategies to manage sadness (i.e., acting opposite with music and mood regulating playlists)

References

Kazda, L., Bell, K., Thomas, R., McGeechan, K., Sims, R., & Barratt, A. (2021). Overdiagnosis of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder in children and adolescents: A systematic scoping review. *Journal of the American Medical Association Open Network*, *4*(4), Article e215335. https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2021.5335

Lesson 2.1: What is sadness?

1. Goals

- Students will explain the role that sadness plays in our lives and differentiate it from depression.

- Students will describe how sadness can help protect and redirect our attention but also get in the way of getting what we need or want.

- Students will describe how they experience sadness in terms of their body sensations, thoughts, and behaviors.

- Students will analyze musical examples and explain how the emotion of sadness is portrayed with regard to the structural and referential elements of music.

2. Relevant Standards

- MU:Cr2.1.C.Ib: Identify and describe the development of sounds or short musical ideas in drafts of music within simple forms (such as one-part, cyclical, or binary).

- MU:Cr2.1.C.Ia: Assemble and organize sounds or short musical ideas to create initial expressions of selected experiences, moods, images, or storylines.

3. Overview of Sadness

Everyone feels sad sometimes and sadness, like the other emotions, is important because it communicates that something hurts and directs our attention to seeking help. Sadness also "organizes our responses to losses of someone or something important, and to goals lost or not attained" (Linehan, 2015, p. 328). So even though we'd rather not experience sadness, its value to what it means to be human cannot be dismissed.

Sadness is justified when we're hurt, we've experienced a loss (of a person or a thing), or when an important goal in life is permanently blocked. This means sadness in life is inevitable and we should characterize it (as well as experiences like disappointment or grief) as a normal emotion. And just because someone accepts that life will have sadness in it *does not* mean that you are agreeing to a life full of pain and sadness. Sadness helps us figure out what is important in our lives, redirects our attention and resources towards things that we value, and signals to others that we may need support.

Sometimes we feel depressed, which is a more intense form of sadness – and some may call it the dysregulated form of sadness. But it's important to note that sadness and depression are not the same. Further, someone can feel depressed without having *depression*. Depression (or what is referred to as a Major Depressive Disorder [or colloquially as "clinical depression"]) is a syndrome – a collection of symptoms which include: depressed mood, loss of interest or pleasure, changes in appetite and sleep, fatigue, low motivation, difficulty concentrating, among others. Additionally, depression needs to be present at a certain level of intensity and duration for a diagnosis to be considered. The important point is not to equate sadness and depression because doing so pathologizes the experience of feeling sad which is inevitable in life.

Sadness, like fear, can get in the way, particularly when it stops us from working/going to school, spending time with family and friends, or taking care of ourselves. Many people find it difficult to recognize or articulate the feeling of sadness. This may be because sadness is often viewed as something

that can be easily overcome (e.g., "put on a happy face" or "turn that frown upside-down"); therefore, sadness may be viewed as a failure of conviction or character. Further, sadness is an unpleasant emotion and there may be fear of contagion (Hatfield et al., 1993), i.e., making other people sad or glum simply by being around them. Unfortunately, in addition to feeling tired or unmotivated, this may lead to the primary action of sadness: withdraw.

> **NOTE:** You are not providing therapy or treatment: instead, the information and exercises described below should be used to support students with whom you work more effectively. In all cases, if a student is struggling in some way you are encouraged to contact your school's mental health intervention team.

4. The Actions of Sadness

The actions of sadness include withdrawing, slowing down, or stopping. These actions allow the person to take a pause to reassess a situation or to protect themselves. Regarding the latter, when we're feeling hurt, either physically or psychologically (the brain makes little distinction between the two), we often take measures to ensure that we are not injured again or hurt further. Consider the following: You are baking and you reach into the oven to remove a baking sheet. Despite wearing oven mitts, the top of your hand brushes the hot metal rack. Feeling pain, you immediately pull your hand out of the oven, bringing it closer to yourself. Ask: "Why do you bring your injured hand close to you?" It's likely because when you pull things that are injured close to your body, you can more easily protect them from harm. That's why we don't leave our hand in the oven where it might continue to be damaged. It's instinctual and when we're hurt emotionally we act similarly: withdraw. It's understandable, therefore, why people who are hurt tend to retreat into themselves – as protection from additional harm.

Sadness, or the intensity of that emotion, may be unjustified in situations that don't fit the facts or are not effective in getting what we want or need. For example, if the intent of sadness is to communicate that something hurts, unjustified or dysregulated sadness may try to convince you that *everything* hurts. While sadness signals to others that we need support yet we're isolating ourselves from that help, the intensity of sadness may be unjustified. Finally, sadness sometimes compels us to stop, protect, and reassess a situation; however, if we're having trouble getting started again or if we find we're ruminating about regrets or what has been lost, sadness may be unjustified.

It is also helpful to consider whether the actions of sadness are effective in a particular situation. Withdrawing from a relationship where you've been hurt or mistreated in some way may be effective as it helps prevent further harm and allows you to reassess and find help or support. If you're ill or recently injured, sadness may be one of the things that helps you slow down, take a pause, and heal. However, when withdrawing, slowing down, or pausing begins to outlive its usefulness and gets in the way of living the life you want, sadness may no longer be effective.

According to Linehan (2015), "Sadness and disappointment are normal emotions and are often justified by the facts. They become problematic when they outlive their usefulness" (p. 370). Ongoing isolation and withdraw begin getting in the way when our behavioral inertia (i.e., a tendency to stay at rest or maintain the status quo) prevents us from moving or getting active (Kuppens et al., 2012; Thompson et al., 2012). This may lead to a cycle wherein inaction slows behavioral momentum which intensifies the feelings of sadness.

5. Talking About Sadness

Starting a Conversation: When starting a conversation about sadness, it can be helpful to simply acknowledge what you have observed: "Hey, I noticed that you seemed a little down during rehearsal today." This may be enough to start a conversation or, at least, signal that you are willing to talk.

Reluctance to Talk about Sadness: Many are reluctant to talk about sadness. First, the tendency to withdraw and isolate from others limits opportunities to talk and the behavioral inertia that accompanies sadness makes it that much harder to get someone talking. There's also a stigma attached to sadness: For example, there is an unjustified belief that sadness is something that is controllable and an inability to manage sadness is a personal failing (i.e., "I should be able to handle this on my own"). This may lead to feelings of shame which may cause the person to withdraw further. Other reasons that make it difficult to talk about sadness include:

- Not knowing what to say when feeling sad

- Feeling convinced that talking about sadness will not be helpful

- Fearing how other people might react

- Worrying about being hurt if we share about our sadness

- Feeling like a burden to others

- Making others feel sad (through emotional contagion)

If you suspect someone is struggling, you can encourage a conversation by acknowledging some of the things that stop us from talking about sadness: "I know it can be hard to talk about feeling down because it seems like it won't do any good." You can also share what makes it difficult for you to talk about sadness: "It's difficult for me to talk about feeling sad because I'm not sure about what to say and I don't want to bring someone else down."

Noticing Struggles: Sometimes what one may assume to be typical teen behavior may be a sign of an underlying emotional struggle. For example, it's easy to mistake a student's reluctance to come to school, attend rehearsal, or practice their music as laziness. As with Elena, her lack of enthusiasm for ballet class could be similarly interpreted as being unprepared or inattentive. Further, a sudden change in behavior (e.g., an abrupt uptick in absences or missing assignments) can also signal a problem. This isn't to say that all changes in adolescent behavior are a sign of mental health problems; instead, it's a cue for you to be respectfully and sensitively curious:

- Find a private place where others cannot overhear: "Hey, I noticed that you have been missing rehearsals recently. I was worried and was wondering if there is anything I can do to help."

- Validate what they've shared by communicating empathy[5]: "I'm sad to hear that's happening to you" or "It's not easy when that happens."

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[5] Empathy is the ability to recognize and appreciate others' feelings or experience. This is possible in situations for which you have no actual experience because you can either: (a) relate it to a similar experience; or (b) can

- Acknowledge the disclosure: "It can be difficult telling someone that you're having a hard time and I'm glad you told me."

- Remember, your job is not to solve the student's problem; instead, your role is to listen and serve as a resource: "I'd like to see if I can get some help for you and I know who I can talk to."

The Words We Use when Talking about Sadness: As discussed previously, sadness and depression are *not* the same thing. Depression is a dysregulated form of sadness and a diagnosis of a Major Depressive Disorder, by a medical professional, requires the presence of multiple symptoms that encompass more than feeling sad or down over a prolonged period of time. Nevertheless, referring to oneself as *depressed* has entered our vernacular and, for some, can become a part of someone's identity: "I'm so depressed that we won't be stand partners this year" or "It's depressing that we won't be competing in the marching band invitational." Using "depressive" language in place of "sadness" or "disappointment" can be problematic: First, it minimizes the seriousness of depression and characterizes it as something that someone can easily control. This may make it harder for someone to talk about their sadness or depression, feeling shame that they aren't doing a better job "controlling it." Another problem is that it pathologizes (by using the words depressed or depressing) the experience of sadness and disappointment. While calling out students for using the words "depressed" or "depressing" instead of "sad" or "disappointing" will likely not be effective, try subtly rephrasing what they said:

- Student: "I'm so depressed that we won't be stand partners this year."
  Teacher: "It can be sad not to share your stand with the person you want."

- Student: "It's depressing that we won't be competing in the marching band invitational."
  Teacher: "Yea, I'm also disappointed that we won't be in the invitational this year."

It's also important to think about how we talk to someone who is sad. Despite people's heartfelt intentions, the way we respond to others' sadness can be invalidating. Saying, "That's not something to get upset about" or "Don't cry, things will get better" are likely coming from the right place but leave someone feeling unheard. Remember, it's not about *intent* it's about *impact*. It's understandable why we respond to sadness this way. It may be that we aren't sure how to help and we say the first thing that comes to mind: "It'll be okay, it's not something that I would worry too much about." The comment is an attempt at reassurance but ignores the pain the person is feeling. We also may say these types of things to stop a conversation because *we're* uncomfortable talking about sadness. As when discussing fear (Talking About Fear): ensure that conversations are private; listen attentively by leaning into the conversation; acknowledge the emotion they are feeling; and validate the strength and vulnerability it takes to talk about sadness.

Talking about Grief: Grief is a distress response associated with the permanent loss of someone or something of significance. Young people experience grief differently than adults because for some this may be the first loss they have experienced. And grief applies to losses outside of death of a loved one;

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recognize the feeling of the other person. The effective use of empathy involves first the recognition and then the accurate communication that you "get it."

Waldon et al. (2023). *MUSEL: Music-based social emotional learning curriculum.* Conservatory of Music, University of the Pacific. (2/18/23)

moving, changing schools, having a friend move away, and not passing an audition can leave someone with a sense of loss. In general, it's important to normalize the feeling of grief and avoid comments which tell them how they should handle the loss. Here are some suggestions for talking to a student:

- Acknowledge the loss: "I heard that your grandfather died. That must be really hard for you and your family. Do you want to talk about it?"

- Avoid suppressing the sadness in favor of positivity: "It's okay to feel sad right now, you're going through a difficult time."

- Keep the focus on them and avoid relating their sadness or loss to your personal experiences (e.g., avoid, "I remember when I lost my grandparent…").

- Ask what they need: "What do you need from me?" or "What can I do to help?"

- If this isn't a conversation that you can have at that moment, say: "It's really important that we're having this conversation; let's talk later today when we have more time and won't be distracted."

- Be sure to follow up: "Let's check in again tomorrow morning before rehearsal."

Suicide: Everyone plays a part in preventing suicide or self-harm behavior. Sadly, community stigma about suicide, fear of being judged for having suicidal ideation, and worries about *othering*[6] of those who attempt suicide (Fullagar et al., 2007; Roen et al., 2008) make this difficult. Further, the function of suicide and self-harm is often misunderstood. For many, suicide and self-harm are seen as a way to solve a problem, either getting away from something they don't want (e.g., unrelenting pain or unsolvable problems) or obtain something they do want (e.g., to get help or command attention from significant others) (Linehan, 1993).

> **NOTE:** Suicide and self-harm should never be entertained as a solution and any threat of either should be taken seriously and addressed immediately. Contact mental health support services immediately.

And while suicide or self-harm are sometimes disclosed, more often a pattern of behaviors emerge which may signal the need for support or intervention (Table 2.1.1):

Table 2.1.1

Warning Signs Related to Suicide[7]

> - Sudden changes in academic performance (e.g., cutting class, missing assignments, etc.)
> - Being unable to sleep or sleeping all the time (including in class)
> - Talking or writing about death, dying, or suicide

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[6] Othering is a term used when one views or treats a person (or group of people) in a way that is fundamentally different from oneself or the dominant culture. In this instance, othering refers to how society may view those who have suicidal ideation or have made attempts as innately atypical which may result in stigma and/or marginalization.

[7] Source: University of Colorado, Boulder: https://www.colorado.edu/health/tips-talking-students-about-suicide

- Neglecting their appearance or hygiene
- Increased alcohol or other drug use
- Withdrawing from friends, family, or peer groups
- Engaging in violent or self-destructive behaviors
- Expressing feelings that life is meaningless or there is no reason to live
- Acting recklessly or engaging in risky behaviors
- Feeling desperate or trapped, like there is no way out
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Noticeable decline or worsening of mental health conditions (e.g., depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, etc.)
- Giving away possessions

While no single behavior or sign above (Table 2.1.1) reliably predicts a suicide attempt, one should always take suicidal talk, gestures, or ideation seriously and refer immediately to a mental health provider who will conduct further assessment. Some other things to keep in mind:

- Help is always available: You are encouraged to use the **988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline**. This is a free and confidential resource for those in distress and for care providers (including family, friends, and teachers).

- Know the procedures for reporting troubling behaviors or signs of suicide ideation in your school and district. Be sure you know who to contact (e.g., school counselors, crisis team, etc.) when you become concerned.

- Work closely with administrators and mental health providers to design a plan to address student concerns.

- When speaking to students, *avoid* promising that you will keep in confidence information that involves the safety of the student or others: "I cannot promise to keep this confidential if I believe that you, or someone else, is not going to be safe. But I won't reveal more information than is necessary to ensure safety."

- Talking about suicide does not increase suicide ideation (Blades et al., 2018). In fact, Dazzi and colleagues (2014) argue that doing so may decrease ideation and increase the chances of seeking help among those that require it.

6. Analyzing Emotions: Sadness

As with fear, it can be helpful to explore how sadness is experienced in the body, mind, and through behavior. Use the following structure to lead a discussion about sadness:

1. Present the emotion for discussion: *sadness*

2. Draw three columns on the board, each labeled: Body, Mind, and Behavior (Table 2.1.2).

3. Explain what information will go under each of the columns:

- *Body*: "Think about what your body feels like when you are sad or feel like you've lost something important. Focus on things like your muscles, your stomach, or your body temperature."

- *Mind*: "What thoughts do you notice when you're sad? Be specific and imagine your thoughts as they might appear in a 'thought bubble' in a comic strip."

- *Behavior*: "If someone saw you experiencing sadness, what would they see you doing or hear you saying? You can also think about what sadness is trying to make you do."

4. Taking one column at a time, make a list of body sensations, thoughts, and behaviors that are associated with sadness.

5. After completing the lists, engage in a conversation:

- "What makes us feel these things when we're sad?"

- "How could these things possibly get in our way or stop us from getting what we want? How could they get in the way from getting the help we need?"

- "How could you counteract these (body sensations, thoughts, or behaviors)?" (Elicit a discussion about coping skills.)

Table 2.1.2

Analyzing Emotions: Sadness

Body	Mind	Behavior
Muscle fatigue	"This hurts."	Crying
Low energy	"If I stay in one place I won't get hurt anymore."	Slow movement, stopping
"Hollow feeling" in stomach	"I don't deserve (what you have lost)."	Withdrawing from social situations
Pain or pressure in chest	"Things feel hopeless."	Avoiding situations where you may come in contact with others
Difficulty concentrating		
No appetite		Avoiding things that you previously enjoyed
Cold temperature		

7. Analyzing Emotions in Music: Sadness

Similar to fear, sadness is also represented in music which can be another vehicle for exploring that emotion. In alignment with the work of Juslin (2013), Hunter et al. (2010) found that certain structural musical elements, and their manner of composition and execution, corresponded with the perception of certain emotions. Related to the current discussion, they found that slow tempi and minor keys were most strongly associated with the perception of sadness. This aligns with the work of Thompson and

Robitaille (1992) who found that music with slower tempos, minor chord progressions, and chromatic harmony were typically rated by participants as more sorrowful. Hailstone et al. (2009) discovered that instrument timbre exerted the greatest influence on the perception of sadness in instrumental music selections. Interestingly, however, they did not find that the music *induced* sadness in their research participants – it simply conveyed that emotion.

Using the following list of suggested pieces, select an excerpt that you believe conveys sadness. Then, use Table 2.1.3 to structure an analysis.

> Albinoni, T. (2002). Adagio in G minor, arranged by Remo Giazotto. [Song recorded by Jean-Claude Malgoire and La Grande Écurie et la Chambre du Roy]. On *Greatest Hits: Baroque*. Sony Music Entertainment. (Original work published ca. 1708; arrangement 1958).

> Bach, J. S. (2020). Come, sweet death. [Song recorded by Eugene Ormandy and The Philadelphia Orchestra]. On *Bach: Orchestral transcriptions*. Infinity. (Original work published 1715).

> Barber, S. (1989). Adagio for strings, Op. 11. [Song recorded by Leonard Slatkin and the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra]. On *Music of Samuel Barber*. EMI. (Original work published 1936).

> Purcell, H. (1990). Dido's lament, from Dido and Aeneas, Act III, Z. 626. [Song recorded by Raymond Leppard, English Chamber Orchestra, Jessye Norman, Thomas Allen, & Marie McLaughlin]. On *Dido and Aeneas*. (Original work published 1689).

Table 2.1.3

Analyzing Emotions in Music: Sadness

Structural Element	Description	Excerpt from the Music
Dynamics	(e.g., few or gradual changes, *mp* or *pp*)	
Harmony	(e.g., predominantly consonant with occasional dissonance)	
Instrumentation (incl. tone)	(e.g., low tessituras, multiple instruments)	
Melody	(e.g., stepwise, muted ascending/descending, legato)	
Meter	(e.g., common/simple meter, no modulation)	
Rhythm	(e.g., regular/steady rhythmic patterns)	
Tempo	(e.g., slow tempo, few or gradual changes)	
Tonality	(e.g., no modulations, minor keys/modes [Dorian, Phrygian, and Locrian])	

Consider using the discussion questions listed below as a follow-up to both of the analyses (Analyzing Emotions: Sadness and Analyzing Emotions in Music: Sadness). The objective is to draw connections between the personal experience of sadness and musical representations:

- "How are your experiences of sadness (body, mind, and behavior) related to the piece?"

- "Which musical elements do you think best represent the emotion of sadness? What makes you say that?"

- "What portion from the piece do you believe portrays fear in a particularly accurate way?"

- "Which (body sensations, thoughts, or urges to act) did you notice while listening to the piece? What excerpt(s) from the piece brought that on?"

8. Additional Learning Activities and Discussions

- Start a discussion about how sadness may come up in the life of a musician (e.g., not passing an audition, performing a piece at an event which evokes sadness [e.g., memorial service]). Talk about how sadness helps us refocus our attention (e.g., when missing that audition) or connect us with others (e.g., through the music at an event). Also talk about how sadness (when dysregulated in intensity) may get in the way.

- Stimulate a conversation about noticing when peers/others are in distress. Have students describe what they would do if they noticed significant changes or concerning behaviors (use Table 2.1.1 as a reference). The point is not to ignore these signs and to make sure that the person is helped.

- Have students share music selections from their own collection which they believe represent sadness. Using Table 2.1.3, have the students conduct an analysis of those pieces to share in small or large groups.

- Have students compose or improvise short musical ideas which contain musical elements which represent sadness. As a follow up, have students conduct an analysis of the piece or performance using Table 2.1.3.

9. Resources

- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: https://988lifeline.org/
- Addressing Grief: Tips for Teachers and Administrators (National Association of School Psychologists): https://www.nasponline.org/Documents/Resources%20and%20Publications/Resources/Crisis/Addressing_Grief_Tips_for_Teachers_and_Administrators_FINAL.pdf
- Depression: Supporting Students at School (National Association of School Psychologists): https://www.nasponline.org/Documents/Resources%20and%20Publications/Handouts/Families%20and%20Educators/Depression_Supporting_Students_at_School.pdf
- Identifying Signs of Stress in your Children and Teens (American Psychological Association): https://www.apa.org/topics/stress/children
- Students Who Have Experienced a Crisis (American Psychological Association): https://www.apa.org/ed/schools/primer/crisis

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Lesson 2.2: Regulating Sadness

1. Goals

- Students will describe how to reduce vulnerability to dysregulated sadness.

- Students will use different strategies (e.g., avoiding triggers, using the PLEASE Skills, and accumulating positive emotions) to reduce their vulnerability to dysregulated sadness.

2. Relevant Standards

- MU:Cr3.2.C.Ia Share music through the use of notation, performance, or technology, and demonstrate how the elements of music have been employed to realize expressive intent.

- MU:Pr4.3.C.Ia Develop interpretations of works based on an understanding of the use of elements of music, style, and mood, explaining how the interpretive choices reflect the creators' intent.

3. Overview of Emotion Regulation: Sadness

Sadness is an emotion that, for the most part, people want to avoid; but as with all emotions sadness is an inevitable part of life. As already described, sadness is important because it signals to us and others that we are hurt, and it slows us down so we can figure out what is important or what to do next. Problems develop when the sadness is disproportionate to the situation and stops us from getting the help we need or being motivated to action. Therefore, the goal is not elimination of sadness but the *regulation* of it.

In Elena's situation we've drawn the assumption that her inattentiveness during ballet is not caused by a disorder like ADHD and, instead, hypothesize that she is feeling sadness and loss about being unable to dance in a tradition with which she identifies. Feeling sad slows her down, decreases her motivation, and causes her to withdraw (e.g., through daydreaming). It's understandable, therefore, that the adults around her would interpret what they see as inattention. Ideally, Elena's sadness (manifesting as "inattention") could signal others (e.g., her parents or ballet instructor) to check in and find out about her unhappiness. In this situation, sadness helps communicate that something is wrong so that time, attention, and resources can be redirected. Instead, Elena seems to withdraw from ballet class, daydreaming of Mexican Folkloric dancing. As a coping strategy, this helps her reduce contact with reality and provides some relief. This might become a problem if Elena's inattentiveness begins to spread to more areas of her life or if she begins withdrawing from family, friends, or school activities. Sadness, like the other emotions, intensifies when you engage in the corresponding action: in this case, withdraw.

Before proceeding further, review the *Emotion Regulation Basics* in Unit 1.

> **NOTE:** You are not providing therapy or treatment: instead, the information and exercises described below should be used to support students with whom you work more effectively. In all cases, if a student is struggling in some way you are encouraged to contact your school's mental health intervention team.

4. Reducing Vulnerability

Avoiding Triggers for Sadness: There are a few ways to go about regulating sadness. First, it is important to reduce vulnerability to dysregulated sadness. One step involves identifying and avoiding triggers (i.e., people places, or events) which may bring about sadness. If someone knows that being around others who are in pain or distress induces bouts of sadness, limit contact. If hearing or reading about tragic events is painful, avoid the news or skim past headlines which portend bad news. The truth is, however, one cannot avoid all potentially sadness-inducing events; sadness, after all, is inevitable.

Taking Care of the PLEASE Skills: Reducing vulnerability also includes paying attention to the PLEASE Skills, biological factors which may make us more susceptible to dysregulation (see PLEASE Skills in Unit 1). Taking care of the body, eating in a balanced manner, avoiding mood-altering substances, getting balanced sleep, and getting physical exercise help by giving more control to a person when they are feeling sad or overwhelmed.

Accumulating Positive Emotions: Another strategy for reducing vulnerability to dysregulation is by accumulating positive emotions. Linehan (2015) explains that "When you accumulate positive experiences, events, and valued behavior patterns, you build a wall between you and the sea of emotional dyscontrol" (p. 382). People that are feeling sadness or struggle with depression may be unmotivated to engage in pleasant activities for fear of not enjoying them as much as they used to. This, coupled with the inclination to withdraw, results in fewer opportunities to experience the slightest bit of happiness (see Accumulating Positive Emotions below).

Acting Opposite: Choosing to do the opposite action involves behaving in opposition to what the emotion is urging you to do. Linehan's (1993, 2015) technique entails creating a new feeling in place of one that no longer is serving its function or purpose. By acting in the *opposite* you essentially deprive the unwanted emotion of what it needs to stay around. For example, with sadness, a person is acting *in the opposite* when they become active, approach, and engage. Acting in the opposite deprives the unwanted emotion because it requires certain behaviors (withdrawing) to survive. An exercise for using music to act in the opposite is found in the next lesson (see Lesson 2.3: Music for Acting Opposite).

Using a Mood Iso Playlist: Another way to regulate emotions involves a more gradual approach using the Iso Principle. The technique involves playing music which initially matches the mood you are experiencing (and that you want to change) and then gradually altering the music to a mood you would prefer. The technique is based on the manipulation of different musical elements which, when played in a particular sequence (like a playlist), have a noticeable effect on a person's mood. A technique for building such a playlist using the iso principle is included later in this unit (see Lesson 2.4: Mood Iso Playlist).

5. Accumulating Positive Emotions

As mentioned previously, people who struggle with sadness or ongoing depression symptoms find it difficult to experience positive emotions. Sadness and depression often limit a person's ability to take satisfaction in things the way they used to: this is called *anhedonia*, a loss of interest or pleasure in doing things previously enjoyed. This leads to a reluctance to engage in those activities for fear of not enjoying them. Additionally, people with ongoing sadness or depression often have fewer opportunities to participate in activities, including those they used to enjoy. So, this decrease in opportunity and concern

about not enjoying activities means that the likelihood of experiencing positive emotions is greatly diminished.

Accumulating positive emotions involves increasing the number of pleasant events you encounter each day *and then* being mindful of feeling pleasure (and unmindful of worries). The idea is that regularly participating in pleasant activities will help improve mood because it: (1) counteracts the action of sadness; (2) increases opportunities to experience pleasure; and (3) provides an alternative focus for attention (i.e., away from sad thoughts). There is a large body of research published on "behavioral activation" and "activity scheduling" interventions to treat depression. In a meta-analytic review, Cuijpers et al. (2007) found that the outcomes of using this strategy were as good or better than standard cognitive behavior therapy. Simmonds-Buckley et al. (2017) found that the approach was appealing to participants because they found it easy to use and integrate into a daily routine. And while the objective here is not to treat depression symptoms in students, the technique can be applied to help elevate mood in those who may need it.

Developing a Pleasant Activities List: A first step involves creating a list of positive experiences or events that are easily available[8]. There are a number of lists published and accessible through the internet (see Resources below). Alternatively, as an in-class exercise, it may be helpful to use the following procedure[9]:

1. Explain to students that research shows that treating ourselves kindly can help improve mood and reduce stress.

2. Have the students think about and make a list of activities that they enjoy (especially those things that are easily accessible). If needed, prompt them to think about hobbies, sports, leisure activities, or things not related to school or work. (NOTE: Students can complete this step individually – or – the class can brainstorm to generate a large group list).

3. Looking at that list, have students reflect on how often they do these things. For activities that happen less frequently, encourage the students to deliberately schedule one or two of these things during the week. If possible, have them schedule a specific day and time.

4. Have students keep a log/journal of these pleasant activities and how they felt after doing them. (As an example, review the following steps for creating a Pleasant Events Calendar at the following link: https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/pleasant_events_calendar_for_kids)

5. Follow up with them after a week using the following discussion prompts as a guide:

   - "Tell me what you were able to accomplish this week."

   - "What did it feel like *after* you did that activity?"

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[8] The term *available* refers to activities that someone could engage in relatively easily without the need for a tremendous amount of time, travel, or resources. The idea is that the more *available* an activity is, the more likely someone will participate in it.

[9] Adapted from *Greater Good in Education*. Copyright 2022, https://ggie.berkeley.edu/practice/pleasant-events-calendar-for-students/#tab__2

Waldon et al. (2023). *MUSEL: Music-based social emotional learning curriculum.* Conservatory of Music, University of the Pacific. (2/18/23)

- "What got in the way, or made it harder, to try that activity?"

- "What will you do differently the next time?"

Developing a Pleasant Activities Music Playlist: In much the same way a playlist of musical affirmations was developed in Unit 1 (Creating a Repertoire of Musical Affirmations), have students generate a list of music they find to be uplifting or motivational. In particular, have them pay attention to the structural and referential elements of the music which helps them improve their mood. Encourage them to listen to these pieces regularly to maintain or boost their mood.

Being Mindful of Pleasant Activities: It's not uncommon to be doing something you enjoy (e.g., taking a vacation) but having your mind wander away from the pleasant activity (e.g., counting down the days until your vacation is over). Part of participating in an activity includes being mindful of the pleasure and unmindful of worries. This means that doing anything pleasant, whether it's physical, social, or musical, requires throwing your *mind* into the activity. Marra (2005) provides some practical suggestions which might be helpful when discussing students' efforts to plan and participate in pleasant activities.

- Pay attention to the activity mindfully.

- Be engaged in the activity in spite of [the] current feeling, paying more attention to the behavior and the environment than to [the] current feeling.

- Attend to the environment and not [the] thoughts – be in the now rather than thinking about when it will end, how long it will last, or if [you] deserve it.

- When the mind wanders (as it will), bring it back into the current moment.

- Don't judge the emotions or compare them to the past or the future, just notice the now. (p. 201)

6. Regulating Emotions with Music: Sadness

Just as with fear, music can be used symbolically to represent the emotion of sadness (Thaut, 2005). As reviewed previously (Analyzing Emotions in Music: Sadness), different combinations of musical elements can be used symbolically to depict expressions of sadness. By listening to or playing musical excerpts that represent sadness, students may feel freer to examine, discuss, or explore sadness because the emotion is external. The following exercise involves: identifying musical excerpts (as short as a measure or two) which illustrate sadness; discussing how the excerpt is composed to represent sadness; playing through the excerpt; and adjusting structural music elements to depict a transition from sadness to a more neutral (euthymic[10]) state.

1. Looking through the score for any of the pieces identified in Analyzing Emotions in Music: Sadness, locate a short excerpt which represents sadness.

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[10] Euthymia is a temperate mood state which is absent of elevation or dysregulation. In this instance, it is not a state that is absent of sadness nor is it the presence of happiness or contentment.

2. Discuss how the excerpt is composed in a way to depict sadness. In particular, look at the composer's use of dynamics, harmony, instrumentation (including playing articulations), melody, meter, rhythm, tempo, and tonality.

3. Play through the excerpt multiple times to acquire an understanding of how the compositional elements are used to express sadness.

4. Looking back at the score, think about how those structural elements could be *recomposed* to lessen the depiction of sadness. Discuss how changing one element (e.g., gradually increasing dynamic levels or slowly increasing the tempo) may decrease the intensity of the emotional expression.

5. Play through these *recompositions* and discuss how the emotional experience was different.

6. With these compositional ideas in mind, alternate between the original version of the excerpt and the *recomposed* excerpt. Pay attention to your own emotional response to what you are playing and hearing.

7. Try improvising short passages of your own, alternating between high and low expressions of sadness.

7. Additional Learning Exercises and Discussions

- Have students make a list of situations when they may be more vulnerable to sadness.

- Revisit a discussion about how taking care of one's physical health (PLEASE Skills) is important for the life of a musician and for maintaining mental wellness.

- Continue having students keep track of their PLEASE Skills for a week (see Appendix A) and report back about what they find. In particular, have the student look for patterns between eating and sleeping and the relationship with playing, practicing, and rehearsing.

- Have students make a list of pleasant activities or events that they can easily access to help them accumulate positive emotions.

8. Resources

- Students Experiencing Inattention and Distractibility (American Psychological Association): https://www.apa.org/ed/schools/primer/inattention
- Students Experiencing Sadness (American Psychological Association): https://www.apa.org/ed/schools/primer/sadness
- List of Pleasant Activities (California State University East Bay, Student Health & Counseling Services): https://www.csueastbay.edu/shcs/counseling/wellness-resources1/pleasant-activities-while-physically-distancing.html
- List of Pleasurable Events (PsychDB): https://www.psychdb.com/_media/list_of_pleasurable_activities.pdf
- Pleasant Events List (James Madison University, Counseling Center): https://www.jmu.edu/counselingctr/files/Pleasant%20Events%20List.pdf

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Simmonds-Buckley, M., Kellett, S., & Waller, G. (2019). Acceptability and efficacy of group behavioral activation for depression among adults: A meta-analysis. *Behavior Therapy*, *50*(5), 864-885. https://doi.org/10/1016/j.beth.2019.01.003

Lesson 2.3: Music for Acting Opposite

1. Goals

- Students will explain the concept of Linehan's Opposite Action and how it relates to changing (or regulating) an unwanted emotion, e.g., sadness.

- Students will identify musical characteristics which represent sadness and contrasting musical characteristics which represent an opposing mood state.

- Students will select musical repertoire appropriate for inclusion in an Acting Opposite playlist.

2. Relevant Standards

- MU:Pr4.1.E.Ia: Explain the criteria used to select a varied repertoire to study based on an understanding of theoretical and structural characteristics of the music, the technical skill of the individual or ensemble, and the purpose or context of the performance.

- MU:Re7.1.E.Ia Apply criteria to select music for specified purposes, supporting choices by citing characteristics found in the music and connections to interest, purpose, and context.

- MU:Cn10.0.H.Ia: Demonstrate how interests, knowledge, and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing, and responding to music.

3. Review of Opposite Action

As previously discussed, music listening, composition, and improvisation can be used to help students identify and express emotions. Further, these musical activities can help assist students in identifying the *functions* of emotions (i.e., what emotions communicate) and the corresponding *behavioral actions* (i.e., what emotions make us do) that accompany them. Finally, exercises can be created to assist students in regulating and changing unwanted emotions, e.g., changing from a state of sadness to a more euthymic (neutral) state.

Linehan (1993, 2015) developed the Opposite Action skill as a behavior-based method to help clients change an unwanted emotion by engaging in an action that is opposite to the one that corresponds to the current emotion (see Acting Opposite). The idea is that a person can change an unwanted, or ineffective, emotion through behavior or action. Keep in mind that although an emotion may be justified (e.g., feeling sadness as a result of losing something or someone important), the emotion may outlive its usefulness and start getting in the way. Marra (2005) states that this type of technique is "designed to change the feeling rather than deny its presence" (p. 201). In this way, acting in the opposite helps the person regulate, rather than deny the presence of, an emotion so that it doesn't interfere with important life tasks. Interestingly, people may already be using music in this way, i.e., using it to energize and motivate.

> **NOTE:** You are not providing therapy or treatment: instead, the exercise described below highlights how music can be used to move our actions and mood in a new direction. In all cases, if a student is struggling in some way you are encouraged to contact your school's mental health intervention team.

4. Steps for Making and Using Music for Acting Opposite

Step 1: Select Music for Acting Opposite:

Identify music selections which include compositional elements that contrast with those identified in Table 2.1.3. It is important to have students do this in advance of feeling an unwanted emotion because attempting to do this while experiencing emotion dysregulation would be challenging. An analysis process similar to the one described in Analyzing Emotions in Music: Sadness could be helpful (see Table 2.3.1):

Table 2.3.1

Structural Musical Elements for Sadness and its Opposite

Sadness	Structural Element	Opposite: Sadness
(e.g., few or gradual changes, *mp* or *pp*)	**Dynamics**	(e.g., sudden changes, *f* or *ff*)
(e.g., predominantly consonant with occasional dissonance)	**Harmony**	(e.g., consonance and dissonance, contrapuntal)
(e.g., low tessituras, multiple instruments)	**Instrumentation (incl. tone)**	(e.g., high and low tessituras, multiple instruments/timbres)
(e.g., stepwise, muted ascending/descending, legato)	**Melody**	(e.g., stepwise and intervallic leaps, various articulations)
(e.g., common/simple meter, no modulation)	**Meter**	(e.g., changing or compound meters)
(e.g., regular/steady rhythmic patterns)	**Rhythm**	(e.g., syncopation, various changes)
(e.g., slow tempo, few or gradual changes)	**Tempo**	(e.g., fast tempo, sudden changes)
(e.g., no modulations, minor keys/modes [Dorian, Phrygian, and Locrian])	**Tonality**	(e.g., modulations present, major and minor keys/modes)

Next, have students identify pieces (preferably from their personal libraries) that may fit all or some of the structural music characteristics in the Opposite: Sadness column (Table 2.3.1). In particular, have students consider familiar or favorite pieces of music as it is more likely they will use them when needed.

Step 2: Make the Music Easily Accessible

Have students prepare an Acting Opposite: Sadness Playlist on a mobile or similar device. As with selecting favorite music pieces, the more readily available a playlist is to the student the more likely they will listen to it when needed. It's also ideal to have headphones, earbuds, or similar listening devices as the student can easily control the volume/intensity of their listening.

Step 3: Noticing an Unwanted Emotion

The next step involves noticing when an emotion is present and determining that it is unwanted. Questions to guide this step include:

- What emotion are you experiencing in this moment? Is this sadness and how can you tell (refer to Table 2.1.1)?

- What is the emotion making me do (e.g., withdraw, hide, isolate, etc.)?

- Is this action (e.g., withdrawing, hiding, isolating) the most effective thing for me right now? Is it getting in my way of going to school, socializing, or taking care of myself?

- Do I want to change this emotion? If the answer is YES, move to the next step.

- If the person is unsure, consider consulting with the school's mental health personnel.

Step 4: Listening to the Acting Opposite Playlist

Start listening to one of the pieces on the *Acting Opposite Playlist*. Encourage the student to pay particular attention to the structural elements of the music and encourage them to mentally follow melody lines or instruments during multiple listenings. If the selection has lyrics, encourage the student to sing along. If the student feels inclined to move rhythmically or creatively, encourage them to do so.

Here are some additional listening guidelines:

- Listen closely to the tempo – notice as it shifts and changes over time.

- Pay attention to the rhythm or accompaniment – notice whether it varies, stays consistent, or if there is a particular pattern that occurs during verses, bridges, or repeated sections of the piece.

- Focus on a single instrument or voice part – pay attention to its musical line (e.g., as it rises and falls) throughout the piece.

- Try concentrating on a different instrument or voice part, particularly one that is not the "lead" – observe how it interacts with other parts.

- When listening for a particular instrument (e.g., auxiliary percussion), pay attention to when it is present and when it is absent (tacet).

Step 5: Checking the Unwanted Emotion Action

While listening (or between selections) have the student notice what they are doing or what they feel like doing. In the case of sadness, have them pay attention to their level of energy and whether the inclination to withdraw or isolate is still present. If the unwanted action persists, have the student listen to another selection from the playlist.

Step 6: Noticing the Current Emotion

Re-evaluate the current emotion by paying attention to what is going on in body, mind, and behavior (refer to table 2.1.1). Questions to ask:

- How have things changed, i.e., before listening to after listening?

- In what ways does the body feel different?

- How have my thoughts changed since listening?

- What do I feel like doing now?

- What emotion are you experiencing now?

5. Additional Learning Activities and Discussions
- Have students, working in small groups, share their Acting Opposite Playlists with each other and encourage them to discuss the structural musical elements that the selections have in common.

- Encourage students to keep a log of the music they listen to daily and the extent to which that music affects their mood.

6. Resources
- The Magic of Opposite Action (University of Oregon, Counseling Services): https://counseling.uoregon.edu/magic-opposite-action#:~:text=For%20example%2C%20fear%20is%20justified,having%20to%20give%20a%20presentation

References

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Marra, T. (2005). *Dialectical Behavior Therapy in private practice: A practical and comprehensive guide*. New Harbinger.

Lesson 2.4: Mood Iso Playlist

1. Goals
   - Students will explain the concept of iso principle and how it can be used to change (or regulate) an unwanted emotion, e.g., sadness.

   - Students will identify musical characteristics which represent sadness and opposing musical characteristics which represent a more neutral mood state.

   - Students will design a mood iso playlist that can be used to move someone's emotions from sadness to a more neutral (euthymic) mood state.

2. Relevant Standards
   - MU:Pr4.1.E.Ia: Explain the criteria used to select a varied repertoire to study based on an understanding of theoretical and structural characteristics of the music, the technical skill of the individual or ensemble, and the purpose or context of the performance.

   - MU:Re7.1.E.Ia Apply criteria to select music for specified purposes, supporting choices by citing characteristics found in the music and connections to interest, purpose, and context.

   - MU:Cn10.0.H.Ia: Demonstrate how interests, knowledge, and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing, and responding to music.

3. Review of the Iso Principle

Another way of changing an unwanted emotion is by using a mood-regulating playlist, one in which music selections initially match a starting emotional state then *gradually* shift to a more neutral state. This approach is different from *acting opposite* which involves a more sudden, "all the way" technique to changing mood.

The *iso principle* is a widely recognized concept in the music therapy field. It was first suggested by Ira Altschuler (1948), a psychiatrist, who argued that a person's mood could be altered from a less desirable state to a more desirable one through the measured alteration of musical elements. Music therapists have used this technique (sometimes referred to as mood vectoring) with children (Sena Moore & Hanson-Abromeit, 2015), adolescents (Hence & McFerran, 2017), and adults (Bautch, 2021; Heiderscheit & Madson, 2015). It has also been used in psychological research as a way to induce certain mood states for the purposes of experimentation (Västfjäll, 2001; Starcke et al., 2021) and this music-based approach is considered superior to traditional, verbal techniques (Joseph et al., 2020; Kenealy, 1988; Pignatiello et al., 1989).

> **NOTE:** You are not providing therapy or treatment: instead, the exercise described below highlights how music can be used to gradually move mood in a new direction. In all cases, if a student is struggling in some way you are encouraged to contact your school's mental health intervention team.

4. Steps for Making and Using a Mood Iso Playlist

Step 1: Select Music for the Mood Iso Playlist:

Using their personal music library, have students identify 5 to 7 music selections which include compositional elements that align with those identified in Table 2.1.3. Encourage them to focus on the structural elements, referential elements, and lyrical content (where applicable); this provides multiple

ways for students to connect with the selection if it is included on the playlist. Using a similar procedure, have them find 5 to 7 music selections which represent an opposite or neutral (euthymic) mood state. In the case of sadness, one might find music that aligns with the feelings of "calm," "hopefulness," or "contentment." This selection process closely aligns with the one described in Analyzing Emotions in Music: Sadness.

Step 2: Set the Musical Anchors:

From the music assembled in Step 1, have students identify: (1) The selection that represents the unwanted emotion (i.e., sadness) with the most intensity (position 1 on the playlist); and (2) The selection which is least representative of the unwanted emotion (usually coming from the opposing or neutral emotion set of selections in Step 1; the last position on the playlist). These two selections will serve as the 1st and last selection on the mood iso playlist.

Step 3: Ordering/Completing the Mood Iso Playlist:

Looking at the remaining selections, direct the students to find a piece from the assembled music that represents a half-way point between the anchors (the 1st and last selections from Step 2). The piece should represent a neutral or transition between the two opposing mood states. This will serve as the middle point on the mood iso playlist. The remaining selections on the playlist are similarly ordered with music more closely representing the unwanted emotion set before the mid-point – and pieces that represent less of the unwanted emotion appearing after the mid-point. A sample playlist based on a case study by Heiderscheit and Madsen (2015) appears in Figure 2.4.1:

Figure 2.4.1

Iso Music Playlist[11]

MOST SADNESS
1. *Ce He Mise Le Ulaingt* - L. McKennit. (1994). On *The Mask and the Mirror.* Warner Bros.
2. *Wild Roving No More* - Barnes, S., & Kentigerm (2008). On *Holding Up Half the Sky: Voice of Celtic Women*. Dara Records.
3. *Storm in My Heart* - Keane, D. (2008). On *Holding Up Half the Sky: Voice of Celtic Women*. Dara Records.
4. *Lazy Days* - Enya (2000). On *A Day WIthout Rain*. Warner Bros.
5. *Are Ye Sleeping Maggie* - MacLean, D. (1996). On *Putomayo Presents: A Celtic Collection*. Putomayo World Music.
6. *Eirigh Suas Stoirin* - Brennan, M. (2003). On *Celtic Circle.* WIndham Hill Records.
7. *Never Tire of the Road* - Irvine, A. (1996). On *Putomayo Presents: A Celtic Collection*. Putomayo World Music.
8. *The Bonny Swans* - L. McKennit. (1994). On *The Mask and the Mirror.* Warner Bros.
9. *Pligrim* - Enya (2000). On *A Day WIthout Rain*. Warner Bros.
10. *Joy Be wIth You* - Ceoltoiri. (1998). On *Women of Ireland*. Maggie's Music.
11. *My Darling, I'm Fond of You* - Ceoltoiri. (1998). On *Women of Ireland*. Maggie's Music.
12. *Alasdair Mhic Cholla Ghasda* - Capercaille. (1996). On *Putomayo Presents: A Celtic Collection*. Putomayo World Music.
LEAST SADNESS

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[11] Source: Heiderscheit & Madsen (2015, p. 49-50, 52)

Not all iso playlists need to be 12 pieces in length: some may be much shorter while others longer. It's important to note that both the music selections and length are highly individualized. In the example from Heiderscheit and Madsen (2015), the client's preference was for Celtic music and the specific selections were drawn from their personal CD collection. Further, mood iso playlists can be designed to change other unwanted emotions, e.g., fear and anger.

Step 4: Make the Music Easily Accessible

As with using music for acting opposite, have students prepare their mood iso playlist on a mobile or similar device. The easier it is for them to access the playlist, the more likely the student will use it when needed. Having access to headphones, earbuds, or similar listening devices will allow students to listen to their playlists privately.

Step 5: Listening to the Mood Iso Playlist

After the students assemble their mood iso playlists, the following sequence of instructions is suggested:

1. Take a moment to notice your current emotion and its intensity. Notice how the emotion is playing out in your body, mind, and behavior.

2. Identify the music selection which most closely matches the current intensity of the emotion you want to change. This will be the starting place on the iso playlist (from here you will move down the playlist towards the selection which least represents the emotion you want to change).

3. Listen to the starting selection, paying close attention to the elements of the music which match your current mood. When you finish, advance to the next selection on the playlist.

4. Begin listening to the next selection, again listening to those musical elements which portray your current emotion. If you come to the end of the selection, determine whether your current mood matches what you've been listening to. If it does, advance to the next selection. If not, repeat this selection until your mood and the music match.

5. Repeat the listening exercise (i.e., listening to each selection until your mood matches the music) until you reach the end of the playlist.

6. Reassess your current emotion. Again, pay attention to how you experience the emotion in your body, mind, and behavior.

Students will move through their playlists at different rates. Further, some students may take more or less time listening to their playlist depending on how long it takes for their emotions to match the music. Because of this, this type of exercise is best carried out individually as opposed to in a group. Listening sessions should not, however, take longer than 20 to 30 minutes.

Step 6: Reflection

Following a listening session, ask students to consider the following:

- What changes in your mood did you notice?

- What elements in the music (e.g., structural, referential, or lyrical), across the selections, did you find fell in sync with your mood?

- Which piece did you find synchronized with your mood the most/least?

- What (if anything) made the listening exercise challenging?

5. Additional Learning Activities and Discussions

- Have students, working in small groups, share their iso playlists with each other and encourage them to discuss what elements (e.g., structural, referential, or lyrical) led them to be ordered the way they are.

- Encourage students to keep a log of when they use their iso playlists and the extent to which it affects their mood.

6. Resources

- Genres as Social Affect: Cultivating Moods and Emotions through Playlists on Spotify (Open Access Journal: *Social Media + Society*):
  https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/2056305119847514
- How Music Can Make Us Feel Good (National Alliance on Mental Illness, California):
  https://namica.org/blog/music-that-makes-us-feel-good-playlist/
- Why does music affect our moods so much? (PBS: Student Reporting Labs):
  https://www.pbs.org/newshour/classroom/2022/09/why-does-music-affect-our-moods-so-much/

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