

MUSIC AND MENTAL WELLNESS



Grade 7 Music and Mental Wellness Science, Art & Health and Physical Education

Purpose of the Lesson:

Music can have a profound impact on our mood and can boost the brain's production of the hormone dopamine. This increased dopamine production helps relieve feelings of anxiety and depression ([NorthShore University HealthSystem](#)). Listening to music is a great way to boost mood and alleviate feelings of anxiety, stress, sadness and so many more challenging emotions. Through this lesson, your students will have the opportunity to share music that makes them happy. They will create playlists of mood-boosting music and compare their mood before listening to songs that make them happy and afterward to see if the music was able to shift how they felt. They will learn how music impacts our brains and unpack the science behind music therapy, a commonly used therapeutic technique. In the lesson closure, they will discuss and explore how music can be used to support their mental wellness on an ongoing basis.

Curriculum Competencies:

Art

- Research, describe, interpret and evaluate how artists (dancers, actors, musicians, and visual artists) use processes, materials, movements, technologies, tools, techniques, and environments in the arts.
- Reflect on works of art and creative processes to understand artists' intentions.
- Interpret works of art using knowledge and skills from various areas of learning.
- Examine relationships between the arts and the wider world.
- Take creative risks to express feelings, ideas, and experiences.
- Express feelings, ideas, and experiences through the arts.
- Describe, interpret and respond to works of art.

Health and Physical Education

- Describe and assess strategies for promoting mental well-being, for self and others.
- Describe and assess strategies for managing problems related to mental well-being and substance use, for others.
- Explore strategies for promoting the health and well-being of the school and community.

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Science

- Demonstrate a sustained intellectual curiosity about a scientific topic or problem of personal interest.
- Identify a question to answer or a problem to solve through scientific inquiry.
- Use scientific understandings to identify relationships and draw conclusions.
- Contribute to care for self, others, community, and world through personal or collaborative approaches.
- Communicate ideas, findings, and solutions to problems, using scientific language, representations, and digital technologies as appropriate.

First Peoples Principles of Learning:

- Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).
- Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.

Video

[How Can Music Heal the Brain](#) - **SciShow Psych**

Guiding Questions:

- How does music impact your mood?
- Can music change the way you're feeling?
- Do you find you're happier when you're listening to certain genres of music over others?
- Is there a specific song that makes you feel happy?
- When you're feeling down, do you find music helps to change your mood?

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Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

Preparation: Queue up video/set up projector

1. Have the students watch the video “How Can Music Heal the Brain?” This can be found [HERE](#).

2. Pause the video and use the Guiding Questions to spark discussion.

3. Explain the concept of music therapy with your students. Music therapy has become a common therapeutic technique in recent years. Music therapy takes two primary forms: one involves simply listening to relaxing music while talking and the other involves making music with instruments, which can be particularly effective for those who struggle to communicate verbally ([Medical News Today](#)).

In both forms of music therapy, clients are working through challenging situations and improving their mood through music. Share this information with your students to give them some context for the remainder of this lesson.

4. Share with your students that music therapy isn’t just for a therapeutic setting. While music therapy is a method used by therapists to help their clients cope with difficult or challenging emotions, music can be implemented in our everyday lives to shift our moods or improve our mental wellness. When we’re feeling low, there are always some songs that can improve our mood, even slightly. Music helps you feel more in touch with what you're feeling, even if it is the more "negative" emotions, such as sadness. Connecting to these emotions rather than ignoring them (or trying to be happy when you aren't) can also be healthy. Which songs improve our mood will be different for everyone. Music is very personal and it’s important to remind your students that we shouldn’t judge each other's musical choices.

5. Explain the curriculum connections to your students. Share with your students that they are going to be conducting science experiments to test how music impacts their mood. Have them each curate a playlist of mood-boosting music. They can either do this with a pen and paper or, if you have access to computers or tablets, they can create the playlists through YouTube or a music streaming service such as Spotify. Next, you will have your students select a day when their mood is lower for some reason. This could be because they are feeling stressed about school, they’ve had an argument with a family member, or plans they were supposed to have got canceled suddenly. When they’re experiencing this lower day, have them listen to their curated mood-boosting playlist to see if their mood shifts and track this shift on the template found on the next page:

Mood-Boosting Music Experiment

Name: _____

Class: _____

Hypothesis (What do you think will happen)?:

How do you feel before listening to the playlist? (Share your mood):

Procedure (What you did, ie. how long did you listen? Did you listen to the whole playlist?):

Results (What happened):

Conclusion (What we found out by doing this experiment):

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Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

Accommodations/modifications:

- If students are visually impaired, they can record their findings in a voice note
- If students are deaf, they can use some form of visual art instead

6. Have your students share their results. The following week, once students have had time to conduct this experiment and gather their results, have them share their experiences with each other. This can be in partners, in small group discussion or with the class as a whole if some students don't feel as comfortable sharing.

7. Lesson Closure. Reflect with your students on how music is a factor in our mental health and wellness. When we are feeling low, we can use music as a tool to help support our mental health. Equipping ourselves with multiple tools can help ensure we are in the best position possible to acknowledge what we are feeling and shift our mental state when we need to.