



## **Music Reliefs Stress & Anxiety during COVID 19 Pandemic**

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### **Author's contribution**

*The sole author designed, analysed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.*

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### **ABSTRACT**

Fighting against anxiety caused by COVID 19 pandemic is inevitable to mental health programs in every country amid this pandemic circumstance. A 2019 study found that music encourages the release of dopamine in the synapses of the brain. Dopamine is a neurotransmitter that plays an important role in our cognitive, emotional and behavioral functioning known as the "happy hormone". It helps create the feeling of pleasure. While we have long known that music improves mood, there's increasing evidence that it can also contribute to mental & physical health. Being COVID 19 front line warriors, Doctors and police personnel go through exhausting work schedules stretching up to 12 hours or more a day and many of them are finding music therapy a tool to ease their stress levels. When the body is stressed, it may feel tense & tight that may require music therapy helping to facilitate relaxation to reduce anxiety.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Music is the powerful medicine of our mind. Music can help relieve stress and anxiety .it improves our mood & help with one's well-being. As the current COVID 19 situation pushes us further into uncharted territory ,many of us find ourselves spending long hours at home ,either alone or with family and while its critical we practice social distancing , it's important to look after our mental health as much as possible too.one way to do this is to listen music. Listening to music is scientifically proven to affect the brain & lift our mood, making its great tool to help combat coronavirus anxiety.

## 2. STRESS & ANXIETY DURING COVID 19 PANDEMIC

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a new disease and what could happen can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Public health actions, such as social distancing, can make people feel isolated and lonely and can increase stress and anxiety. However, these actions are necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Stress is the body's reaction to any demand placed on the brain or physical body. Anxiety is a feeling of worry or unease, and can be a reaction to stress, too much stress and anxiety can put a negative strain on our daily life. Stress during an infectious disease outbreak can sometimes cause the following:

1. Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones, your financial situation or job, or loss of support services you rely on.
2. Changes in sleep or eating patterns.
3. Difficulty sleeping or concentrating.
4. Worsening of chronic health problems.
5. Worsening of mental health conditions.

If it continues it's important to find a way to cope.

## 3. WHAT IS MUSIC THERAPY

Music therapy is a type of expressive therapy that involves a large variety of music related activities, such as singing, improvising, moving, playing, musical instruments and listening to music. Music therapy has been shown to have positive physical, social and psychological

effects. Different types of music are often used for different reasons in music therapy.

"The objective of music psychology is to create neural changes in the brain that stimulates improvement of psychological & behavioral functions of individuals suffering from mental health problems." [1]

There are many good reasons to keep music in our life, especially now that we're living in the midst of a COVID-19 pandemic. "Music has charms to soothe the savage breast," wrote the English dramatist and poet William Congreve.

Music therapy is a health care profession that has touched many lives with soothing sounds and rhythms, and has been shown through research to effectively treat the symptoms of everything from schizophrenia to post-traumatic stress disorder.

But music is wonderful for maintaining good mental health in us all, which comes at a premium at a time like this.

If we 're feeling stressed about coronavirus or our family is having a hard time adjusting to being at home more than usual, here are some ideas to reduce stress through music:

- Spend a half hour listening to relaxing music. The distraction may help to relieve worries
- Let each family member pick a genre of music to listen to during meals.
- Teach each other a song. Pick a favorite and find the lyrics online.

## 3.1 How Music Affects the Brain

Music is really a combination of many different elements, such as pitch, tempo, and dynamics. How fast, slow, or loud the music, the differently it impacts our brains. When these elements work in combination, we see dramatic changes in physiology and behavior. The effects of music have been documented by scientists for years, and despite its mysteries, one thing is certain: listening to music activates our entire brains, creating the potential for us to use music to improve the way we think, behave, and feel.

## 4. TYPES OF MUSIC

Music is the form of art. Music can be said to be built by the interplay of melody, harmony &

rhythm. Melody is what results from playing notes of different pitches which is soothing. Rhythm is not just a constant periodic beat. It is what results of combining notes of different durations, sometimes coinciding the beat sometimes not. For example, if we notice in Reggae or ska music, the guitar or keyboards most of the times play, at times exactly opposite to the beat. And last but not least harmony. The relationship between different notes played at the same time is what we call harmony (basic musical concepts beat, rhythm melody & harmony).

Music has been used for hundreds of years to restore harmony between mind and body. In recent decades, researchers have measured health-related advantages of music, particularly as they relate to stress reduction and relaxation induction.

Many pieces of great music will uplift you in body, mind and spirit .But of course we all have different tastes in the sort of compositions we enjoy ,be they classical, country and western, jazz, or rock and roll. Music of different tempos & rhythms, and played on different instruments, will also have varying effects on you [2].

Some research points to the following types of music and sounds as being effective stress reducers [3]:

1. Light jazz and classical music
2. Native American, Celtic and Indian stringed-instruments, drums, and flutes
3. Rain, wind, and other nature sounds

Newswise — COLUMBUS, Ohio – In Italy, people isolated by the COVID-19 pandemic stood on apartment balconies, singing “Bella Ciao” – “goodnight, beautiful” – together into the night. Musicians in a Dutch symphony filmed themselves playing Beethoven’s “Ode to Joy” individually – then assembled a compilation video titled “From Us, For You.” In Columbus, children played their cellos from their porch so an elderly neighbor could hear [4,5,6].

There are several ways music can benefit our mental well-being during coronavirus.

## **5. CREATE OUR OWN THERAPEUTIC PLAYLIST**

When we play music as we're cleaning the house or listen to an energetic song during our

morning workout, we could be using music therapeutically without even realizing it. However, by thoughtfully creating a selection of music, we can use a playlist to combat stress, achieve relaxation, increase motivation, and evoke positive emotions.

Here is an example of a playlist that a person compiled for themselves: Go from anxious to relaxed!

To start the process, address our current emotional state. Is it anxious, restless, or sad? How would we like to feel instead? With that goal in mind, know that it's important to bring our self-there gradually through a progression of music that first empathizes with our current mood and then slowly delivers us to our desired emotional state [6].

Here are some guidelines for creating a own therapeutic playlist:

### **5.1 Use Familiar Music**

Start with our own music collection. Our previous associations with pieces of music determine the manner in which we will respond to them. Memories, especially emotional memories, are stimulated by music and can take us back in time in an instant. This already has labeled certain music as happy, sad, energizing, disturbing, and so on. Trust our self and how we believe songs will make our feelings. Once identifying what it is about music that makes us feel a certain way that might want to supplement our current collection by finding new music that contains similar characteristics (choral voices or emphasized percussion). Place pieces of music into different categories according to our common moods like, sluggish, depressed, nervous, tired, anxious, stressed, and so on.

### **5.2 Use Music What We Enjoy**

There is no sense in using that awful music our mother/child/brother/friend makes us listen to. If we can't stand it, we shouldn't use it. we know what we like and should be able to find enough variety within our preferred music to match different moods.

### **5.3 Find Music that Speaks to Our Emotions**

Songs can validate our feelings and actually provide comfort when they match our mood. For

instance, listening to sad music actually causes our brains to produce the same neurochemical that is released when we cry. This chemical, prolactin, helps to elicit feelings of comfort, meaning that listening to a sad song when we are feeling down not only provides empathy, it is causing our brains to start to try to make us feel better one.

#### 5.4 Match Our Mood

Think about how we feel right now. How fast are we moving (inside and out): is our heart racing? Are we feeling sluggish? Are we feeling heavy? How fast are breathing? Before trying to change our mood with music, we will need to match it. An authoritative review of research performed between 1994 and 1999 reported that in four trials ,music therapy reduced symptoms of depression, while a fifth study found no benefit. A 2006 study of 60 adults with chronic pain found that music was able to reduce pain, depression and disability. And a 2009 meta-analysis found that music assisted relaxation can improve the quality of sleep in patients with sleep disorder [7].

This is easier done when we can consider different musical elements:

**Tempo:** This one is easy. Pick a piece of music that matches our heartbeat, our breathing and how fast we feel we are moving.

**Volume:** Simply listening to music is itself a healthy activity, particularly if the music is soothing to the ear and brain. Studies have shown that music can ease stress and anxiety. In fact, one analysis found that music helped postoperative patients reduce stress and require less pain relief medication. Perhaps we are lacking energy and motivation, and things around us are quiet. Then we should Find a song with soft lyrics and instruments & Keep in mind that soft and slow do not always go together, and neither do loud and fast.

**Harmony and Timbre:** Musical instrumentation and background vocals are often written to blend nicely with a melody to add layers of sound in a tonal structure. Some music actually uses instruments and tight harmonies that create a feeling of tension or dissonance. Think about our perceived level of stress and how tense we might feel. Also think about the instruments that appeal us in the moment. The timbre of an instrument refers to the way it sounds.

#### 5.5 Consider Music without Lyrics

Song lyrics leave a little less up to the imagination because someone else's story is being told. When lyrics are included in a piece of music, more of our brains are used to process these lyrics. They might also stimulate more memories. If we are using music for the purpose of trying to relax, we have to allow your mind to wander without consciously focusing on the music. This is more challenging when lyrics are involved. Consider choosing instrumental music or a song where the lyrics reflect the way what we are feeling.

#### 5.6 Order Our List to Help to Reach an Intended Mood

As noted earlier, consider our goal. Do we want to feel energetic, happy, relaxed, or optimistic after listening to our playlist? With our intended mood in mind, we should think of how we might organize the songs to bring us from our current emotional state to our desired. For example, if we started with an up-tempo piece of music that matched our initial state of high anxiety, find something a little slower for our next song. If we are trying to move toward a more relaxed state, select a piece of music that is slightly slower for our third song. The third piece should also have less instrumentation or vocals. The idea is to decrease the amount of stimulation in the music so that our playlist can facilitate a gradual transition while allowing us time to adjust to the music. Select songs that are at least three minutes long and make sure the playlist contains at least thirty minutes of music.we should give our body plenty of time to experience our current emotion and adjust physiologically with the music [6].

#### 5.7 Sing Out Loud

Singing is one form of music participation that offers health benefits all on its own. Singing has been shown to improve focus and concentration, and to decrease stress. Indeed, playing music of any kind on an instrument is a great family activity to do together.

Performing music has been linked to a wealth of health benefits, such as decreased stress and lowered heart rate and blood pressure [8].

#### 5.8 Soothe the Sick

When someone fighting COVID-19 we should play some soothing music for them. It'll help calm

their worries and aid in their healing. Studies have shown a strong link between soothing music, eased stress and lowered pain response in those battling illness.

Whether we're working out, relaxing, singing or just playing, adding music to the mix sounds great for our mental health and overall well-being [6,9].

## 6. TRUST OUR MUSICAL INTUITION

If we have ever listened to music and were moved to tears or motivated to run an extra mile because of it, we already understand that music can have an extreme impact on emotions. When intended, music can provide comfort during difficult times and also promote relaxation. We might be thinking that music is more complicated than we originally thought. It is! Although there is much to consider when using music therapeutically, humans have a particular knack for choosing music that soothes and heals them.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Since ancient times, music has been used to improve our health and mental well-being. The Greek philosopher and mathematician Pythagoras had a firm belief in the healing power of music, while the Roman medical encyclopedist Celsus said that it should be used to calm and cheer patients. During the bubonic plague, music was even prescribed by doctors for health

purposes. And during the current coronavirus pandemic, music can play an important role in improving our mood and lowering stress. Listening to music can lead to decreased anxiety, and can activate areas of the brain involved in emotion regulation. One study found that listening to music even once a week led to an improvement in symptoms of depression after less than a month. Music has a positive impact on our immune function. Given the undisputed therapeutic benefits of music, taking a moment to listen can be especially helpful as we navigate COVID-19 [10].

## COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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