

# Trauma-Responsive Instruction in the Music Classroom

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*tw*: abuse, violence, racism, self-harm, mental illness

## Session Objectives

- Define trauma and how it can manifest in student behavior
- Explore strategies for managing oppositional behavior
- Discuss compassionate/trauma-responsive curriculum and classroom structures

## Defining Trauma

### Symptoms of Trauma

<u>Symptom</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Possible Manifestations</u>
<i>Hyperarousal</i>	A persistent expectation of danger	Impaired capacity to modulate response
<i>Intrusion</i>	A reenactment of the trauma scene (“day-mares”)	Self-harm
<i>Constriction</i>	Disconnection or dissociation	Appearance of being “out of it;” self-medication

## Trauma in Students

### Managing Trauma Responses

- Check your own adrenaline level before engaging
- Maintain a calm and confident demeanor
- Make a brief suggestion/drop a thought
- Use only natural and logical consequences
- Use strategic praise

## Grounding Technique

1. Bring the student into the present moment
  2. Reassure them that this is *not* a punishment
  3. Follow-up with a plan for future incidents
- Grounding tasks (i.e. deep breathing, a walk to the back of the room, a piece of candy to eat, “name one thing you can see/hear/touch”) are useful both to bring dissociated students back into the moment and as a quick Do Now activity to ground your entire class.

## Creating a Trauma-Responsive Classroom

### Compassionate Curriculum Strategies (Wolpow, et. al.)

1. Safety and Connection
  - ◆ Firm classroom procedures and structures
  - ◆ Affirm identities of students
2. Personal Agency, Social Skills, and Academic Skills
  - ◆ Give students the tools for autonomous participation in music-making
3. Emotional Self-Regulation
  - ◆ Intentional and meaningful music-making
  - ◆ Selection of quality repertoire

### Repertoire Suggestions for Developing Band

- Beginning musicians (“Level 0.5-1”)
- ◆ *Last Stage to Red Rock*, Jennifer Jolley
  - ◆ *Three Songs of Bengal*, Aakash Mittal
  - ◆ *Ember Skies*, Kevin Day
- Developing musicians (“Level 1-2”)
- ◆ *The Cave You Fear*, Michael Markowski
  - ◆ *Chasing Sunlight*, Cait Nishimura
  - ◆ *Syzygy*, Viet Cuong
- Advancing musicians (“Level 2.5-3”)
- ◆ *Stillwater*, Kelijah Dunton
  - ◆ *Shenandoah*, Omar Thomas
  - ◆ *Ash*, Jennifer Jolley

→ Most of these composers (plus many more for developing ensembles of all levels!) have works available through Murphy Music Press: <https://murphymusicpress.com>

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