# 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**

Symptom	<u>Description</u>	Possible Manifestations
Hyperarousal	A persistent expectation of danger	Impaired capacity to modulate response
Intrusion	A reenactment of the trauma scene ("day-mares")	Self-harm
Constriction	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

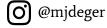
→ Most of these composers (plus many more for developing ensembles of all levels!) have works available through Murphy Music Press: https://murphymusicpress.com

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