
CASMC 2023

Trauma-Informed Teaching in Music Education

Michelle Jamieson, M.M.

mjamieson@natomasunified.org

Erin Price, M.M. (she/her/hers)

epricemused@gmail.com

Betty, M.M.E. (she/her/hers)

brbauman@bu.edu

Sallie Arnold, M.Ed. (she/her/hers)

searnold@bu.edu

OVERVIEW

Universal implementation of trauma-informed practices creates more avenues for access in the music classroom. By cultivating an environment that avoids re-traumatization, teachers can include students who have experienced trauma in their music classrooms. When teachers re-frame difficult behaviors as attempts at communication, student and teacher relationships benefit. By understanding the barriers to self-regulation, communication, and relationship building that stem from traumatic exposure, teachers may begin to form strong connections with their students. Studies show these connections are essential to a child's recovery post-trauma and point to music as a facilitator for healing. When students feel safe within their music class environment, they might freely create, perform, explore, and play.

Section 1: By understanding basic aspects of trauma response, we might begin to reframe our encounters with students.

- Marked physical and psychological changes occur post-trauma. These changes require specialized response and intervention.
 - Dissociation
 - Hyperarousal
 - Constriction
 - Intrusion
 - Disempowerment
 - Other cognitive changes

Section 2: As the number of trauma-affected students continues to grow, it has become increasingly important to establish safe learning environments that support the needs of trauma-affected students.

- Discussion of how to establish such classroom environments by:
 - Incorporating supportive practices
 - Avoiding practices that might potentially retrigger students' trauma

Section 3: Positive and trusting relationships with attentive adults are critical for student success, especially for students who have experienced trauma.

- Discussion of how relationships can assist in:
 - Repairing disrupted attachment styles
 - Regulating dysregulated behavior
- Discussion of strategies for:
 - Building relationships through music
 - Reframing student behavior as communication

Section 4: An educator's capacity to be mentally and emotionally available for students is largely dependent on his/her ability to be focused and present to what is happening in the moment.

- Mindfulness is often described as non-judgmental, moment-to-moment awareness
- Mindfulness fosters the skills of attention, self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and compassion
- Mindfulness skills can be developed through intentional practice

Additional Resources:

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255

SAMHSA Helpline: 1-800-662-4357

INSTITUTE ON TRAUMA AND TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE

casel.org

<http://socialwork.buffalo.edu/social-research/institutes-centers/institute-on-trauma-and-trauma-informed-care.html>

A Quick Dip:

<https://nafme.org/using-trauma-informed-care-to-re-frame-puzzling-student-behaviors-in-the-music-classroom/>

<https://kansasmusicreview.com/2019/01/13/interactions-between-trauma-sequelae-and-elementary-general-music-experiences/>

Deeper Reads:

Bradley, D., & Hess, J. (2021). *Trauma and resilience in music education: Haunted melodies*. Routledge.

Greenland, S. K. (2010). *The mindful child: How to help your kid manage stress and become happier, kinder, and more compassionate*. Simon and Schuster.

Hendricks, K. S. (2018). *Compassionate music teaching: A framework for motivation and engagement in the 21st century*. Rowman & Littlefield

Hess, J., & Bradley, D. (2020). Dewey's theory of experience, traumatic memory, and music education. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 39(4), 429-446. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11217-020-09706-z>

Jennings, P. A. (2019). *The trauma-sensitive classroom: Building resilience with compassionate teaching*. W. W. Norton & Company.

Price, E. E. (2022). Behavioral strategies for trauma-informed elementary general music education for students with emotional/behavioral disorders: A review of the literature. *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/87551233221120235>

Saltzman, A. (2014). *A still quiet place: A mindfulness program for teaching children and adolescents to ease stress and difficult emotions*. New Harbinger Publications.

Venet, S. A. (2019). *Equity-centered trauma-informed education*. W. W. Norton.

van der Kolk, B. A. (2014). *The body keeps the score: Brain, mind, and body in the healing of trauma*. Penguin Publishing Group.