Self-care Music Playlists

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What is self-care?
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Self-care

*noun*

- the practice of taking action to preserve or improve one's own health
- the practice of taking an active role in protecting one's own well-being and happiness, in particular during periods of stress
- any activity that we do deliberately in order to take care of our mental, emotional, and physical health
- is NOT something that we force ourselves to do, or something we don’t enjoy doing
- is NOT a selfish act
- is about knowing what we need to do in order to take care of ourselves, so that we are better able to take care of others as well
Why music?

Music can:
- Create comfort and security
- Energize and motivate
- Increase dopamine levels/improve mood
- Cue a relaxation response
- Change, create, or enhance moods
- Distract/promote active focus
- Be a positive environmental stimulus
- Provide structure
- Elicit emotional responses and/or memories
- Decrease pain
- Lower blood pressure
- Reduce anxiety
- Stabilize heart rate

Music is not a benign intervention!
Self-care Music Playlist(s)

Getting started

- Preferred way to listen to music
  - CD
  - App/service
    - YouTube
    - Spotify
    - Pandora
    - iTunes/Apple Music

- Best option for sound quality
  - Headphones
  - Bluetooth speaker

- Amazon music
- Google Play
- iHeart Radio
Self-care Music Playlist(s)

Set an intention

- When do you need this?
  - Drive to/from work
  - Before going to sleep
  - Transitioning to another activity
  - “Me time” vs. “other(s) time”

- Why do you need this?
  - Comfort
  - Calm
  - Motivation
  - Stress-relief
  - Frustration
  - Hope
  - Grief
  - Decompress
  - Energy
  - Venting
Self-care Music Playlist(s)

Music selection

• Listen to songs to determine how you feel as you listen
• Consider tempo & length (https://songbpm.com/)
  • To calm/relax, try songs with 60-80 bpm (avg resting heartrate)
• Put songs in an order that matches the intention
  • fastest → slowest for calming/relaxing
  • slowest → fastest for energizing/motivating
• Songs may fit into more than one playlist
• Experiment with
  • Familiar verses unfamiliar music
  • Instrumental versus songs with lyrics
  • Different genres
Self-care Music Playlist(s)

Listen and adjust

- Delete songs that don’t fit
- Add songs that you discover
- Rearrange song order, if needed
- Try shuffling the songs
- Sing along, if it feels right
- **Practice mindfulness while listening**
  - Close your eyes (if it’s safe!)
  - Breathing techniques with music
Virtual art experiences, music playlists for stress reduction, concert broadcasts and more

The University of Rochester is uniquely positioned to respond to the challenges presented by COVID-19 from our world-class medical center working on a rapid intervention for COVID-19 to the arts response from our world-class musicians at Eastman Performing Arts Medicine. We are all finding ways to deploy the arts in creative ways to support UR Medicine and the Greater Rochester community. We encourage you to consider using music and art for wellness. Below are links for virtual art experiences, music playlists for stress reduction, concert broadcasts, and strategic information for artists and arts organizations.

Things to consider

• Start with music that fits your current mood before shifting to music with the intent of changing your mood

• Notice how the music is impacting you emotionally
  • Music can elicit negative and positive emotions
  • Stop listening or try something else if it isn’t meeting your needs

• It might take time to find the right music, especially during a time of high stress - don’t worry if it doesn’t click right away!

• It is okay if music is not what you need right now

• It is okay to not use songs that already hold significant meaning to avoid associating them with negative emotions or stressful situations
“Music, uniquely among the arts, is both completely abstract and profoundly emotional. It has no power to represent anything particular or external, but it has a unique power to express inner states or feelings. Music can pierce the heart directly; it needs no mediation.”

- Oliver Sacks, *Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain*


Questions?

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Medicine of the Highest Order