

10 TIPS

Music, mental health, and teens – Tips for music/arts organisations and commissioners

1 : PLACE RESPONSIBILITY IN SCHOOLS AT DEPUTY HEAD, HEAD OR EQUIVALENT LEVEL

- ✓ Helps with buy-in from other staff
- ✓ Ensures things get done



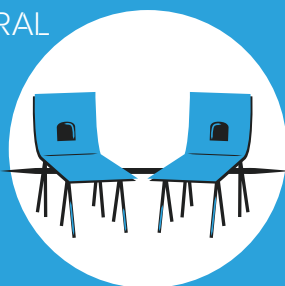
2 : USE PAIRS OF SPECIALIST MUSIC LEADERS/ MENTORS

- ✓ Community music or youth work background
- ✓ Skilled in young people-led, inclusive music practice
- ✓ At least one of each pair has some training/ experience in mental health issues (eg Mental Health First Aid)/ therapy/ counselling)
- ✓ Mix of specialisms - songwriting/ singing + music tech + different genres



3 : INVOLVE SCHOOL PASTORAL STAFF FROM THE START

- ✓ Provide valuable feedback about young people
- ✓ Help you connect students with post-session support



4 : WORK WITH A RANGE OF AGENCIES FOR ANY 1-1 REFERRALS

- ✓ Spreads risk eg delays/ problems in one agency
- ✓ Reaches wider range of young people



5 : ENSURE AWARENESS-RAISING HAPPENS AT THE START

- ✓ Lays foundations for the programme
- ✓ Helps students, teachers, parents understand and support it
- ✓ Avoids teachers being unhappy that a student is missing a lesson – and passing stress on to the student



6 : MAKE COMMUNICATION A PRIORITY: IN ADDITION TO AWARENESS RAISING SESSIONS ...

- ✓ Provide briefings, handouts – to help increase awareness of benefits, establish buy-in
- ✓ Schedule regular check-ins with partners – monthly, termly, by phone/ Skype/ face-to-face
- ✓ Collect anecdotes, statistics, and feedback ... share and encourage sharing with all involved



7 : BE CLEAR ABOUT SELECTION CRITERIA

- ✓ Agree year group, level of musical ability/interest, scale of mental health problems, group dynamic
- ✓ We found success with – year 9, little musical ability but keen interest in music, early indications of mental health problems



8 : KEEP GROUP SIZE NO BIGGER THAN 12, 6 PER MUSIC LEADER

- ✓ Enables music leaders to give vulnerable students the support they need
- ✓ Likely to provide greater options for students in terms of genre, style etc



9 : REFLECTION/ WRITE-UP/ PLANNING TIME AFTER EACH SESSION IS CRITICAL

- ✓ Enables music leaders to adapt week-by-week according to the needs
- ✓ Helps with programme and music leader development



10 : DISCUSS AND SIGNPOST POST-PROGRAMME PATHWAYS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- ✓ Helps ensure the benefits continue
- ✓ Helps avoid young people going back to where they were (not just in music but in learning and life)

