

How Can We Help? Wellbeing Interventions for Choral Music Ensembles

by

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Abstract

With adolescent mental health concerns increasing globally, educators are increasingly examining ways to support student wellbeing within existing educational environments. Music classrooms, which often provide emotionally expressive and collaborative spaces, may offer opportunities to integrate mental wellness strategies into daily instruction. The purpose of this mixed-methods experimental study was to examine the effectiveness of three psychology-informed interventions implemented within secondary choral music classrooms: (1) breathing regulation techniques designed to support physiological self-regulation, (2) a cognitive reframing strategy rooted in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) intended to reduce performance-related anxiety, and (3) an emotion regulation strategy connecting emotional awareness to choral repertoire.

Participants included 335 choral students in grades six through 12 across four public school choral programs who completed repeated measures of anxiety, wellbeing, emotion regulation, emotion awareness, music–emotion engagement, and mood. Quantitative data were analyzed using linear mixed-effects modeling to examine changes across time between intervention and control groups, while qualitative data from interviews and open-ended survey responses were analyzed using inductive thematic analysis.

Quantitative analyses indicated no statistically significant differences between intervention and control groups over time for anxiety or wellbeing outcomes. However, emotion regulation scores demonstrated a significant interaction between group and time when demographic covariates were included, suggesting greater stability in emotion regulation among students receiving the interventions. Mood outcomes also differed between groups across time. Several demographic variables, including school level, gender identity, and self-reported mental

health status, were significant predictors across multiple outcomes. Qualitative findings indicated that students already employ multiple strategies to manage anxiety, frequently using music as a coping tool, and perceived the interventions as potentially helpful and transferable to both performance and non-musical contexts.

These findings suggest that psychology-informed strategies can be integrated into music ensemble settings with minimal disruption while providing students with practical tools for managing stress and emotional experiences. The study contributes to interdisciplinary research connecting music education and mental health and offers practical implications for music educator training and classroom practice.

AI Disclosure

Artificial intelligence tools (ChatGPT) were used in a limited capacity during the preparation of this dissertation to assist with organization and editing of written text. Specifically, the tool was used to review the clarity of methodological explanations, outline statistical analysis procedures, and suggest wording revisions for sections describing data analysis and results. AI-generated suggestions were used only as drafting support and were critically reviewed by the researcher. All research design decisions, statistical analyses, qualitative coding procedures, and interpretation of results were conducted independently by the researcher and verified using course materials, statistical software outputs, and guidance from the dissertation committee. The researcher maintained full responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, and originality of all content included in this dissertation.

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I've heard it said that people come into our lives for a reason, bringing something we must learn, and we are led to those who help us most to grow if we let them, and we help them in return...so much of me is made of what I learned from you, you'll be with me, like a handprint on my heart...who can say if I've been changed for the better, but because I knew you, I have been changed for good.

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List of Abbreviations

ASD: Autism Spectrum Disorder

CBT: Cognitive Behavior Therapy

CDC: Center for Disease Control

DBT: Dialectical Behavior Therapy

DERS-SF: Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale Short Form

EMO: Emotions subscale (researcher designed)

GAD-7: General Anxiety Disorder 7 rating scale

LGBTQIA+: Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer Intersex Asexual +

LMM: Linear Mixed-effects Model

MAE: Music and Emotions subscale (researcher designed)

MOOD: Mood subscale (researcher designed)

MPA: Music Performance Anxiety

SWEMWBS: Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale

WHO: World Health Organization

Chapter 1

Introduction

“Music act[s] like a magic key, to which the most tightly closed heart open[s]” (Trapp, 1949, p. 316). With the rates of mental illness in adolescent populations growing every year, research continues to explore interventional approaches including school-based strategies to promote wellbeing, but research regarding the use of music-based interventions is in its infancy (CDC, 2024). A lack of experimental research exploring music as a potential intervention for overall wellbeing and to improve specific common mental health disorders in adolescence such as depression and anxiety is the driving force behind the conceptualization of this research study (McFerran et al., 2013).

Purpose of the Study

This research study explored what can be done to bridge the gap between the children and adolescents who need help, and the resources they so desperately need. Music departments in middle schools and high schools around the United States are staffed with music educators who desire to make a difference in their students’ lives, filling the role of a safe and trusted adult who provides an environment where they and their peers can work together towards a common goal, and be pushed to be the very best version of themselves, while simultaneously instilling a love of one of the oldest and most important types of communication, community building, and emotional release (Hendricks et al., 2014). These music educators enter the profession with a strong foundation in the theoretical, historical, and practical aspects of music-making, but frequently receive insufficient education in mental health and supporting student wellbeing (Doyle, 2012).

Understanding the potential impact of mental wellness strategies in music classrooms requires both quantitative and qualitative forms of investigation. Quantitative measures can provide insight into measurable changes in factors such as anxiety, wellbeing, and emotion regulation, while qualitative data allows researchers to better understand how students experience and interpret these strategies within real classroom environments. Because the present study seeks to examine both the measurable outcomes of the interventions and the ways students describe their emotional experiences and use of the techniques, a mixed-methods research design was selected.

Research Questions

This research addresses the following research questions:

1. To what extent were psychology-informed breathing and cognitive reframing strategies implemented in secondary choral classrooms associated with changes in students' anxiety and wellbeing over time?
2. To what extent was a music-based emotion regulation intervention associated with changes in students' emotion regulation, emotion awareness, music–emotion engagement, and mood over time?
3. How did students and choir directors describe the usefulness and transferability of the interventions in choral, academic, and everyday contexts?

Significance of the Study

The hypothesis was that psychology based mental wellness supports in music ensemble classrooms will reduce both general and performance anxiety, improve emotion regulation, improve overall student wellbeing, and improve overall musicality in performance settings. The

null hypothesis was that psychology based mental wellness supports in music ensemble classrooms has no impact on anxiety, emotion regulation, wellbeing, or musicality.

This research study is significant because it provides data regarding practical intervention strategies that can be implemented in choral music classrooms by educators with minimal mental health training. This study provides a data-driven framework for professional development and undergraduate music education coursework that delineates music educator best practices regarding wellbeing, anxiety reduction, and emotion regulation. This research is also informed by the researcher's professional experiences as a music educator encountering increasing mental health needs among students in ensemble settings.

Overview of the Study

To explore both measurable outcomes and student experiences, this dissertation study employed a mixed-methods experimental design combining quantitative survey data with qualitative interviews to provide a more comprehensive understanding of student experiences. Participants were middle school and high school choral students, with students in the selected experimental schools receiving three psychology-based interventions: (1) breathing regulation techniques designed to support physiological self-regulation, (2) a cognitive reframing strategy rooted in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) intended to reduce performance-related anxiety, and (3) an emotion regulation strategy connecting emotional awareness to choral repertoire.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations of this study included difficulties securing a research site location. This was due to a combination of factors ranging from my location in the southern United States, the broader political and educational climate surrounding mental health research in public schools,

and the availability of sites to conduct experimental research within public school settings. Due to that limitation, there is potential for bias in the sample as the district that approved the research already had established social emotional learning constructs. As with all self-report measures in psychology-based research, there is potential bias due to the Observer Expectancy Effect, where participants change their behavior to please the researcher or align with a perceived hypothesis (Ungvarsky, 2026). Additionally, the complexity and design required sufficient expertise in music, quantitative research, and qualitative research to fully realize the study. Limitations that emerged during the course of the study included difficulties with scheduling in multiple school campuses, one control group site declining to participate in a second administration of the pretest, and a weather-related phenomenon that affected student attendance at the time of the study.

Delimitations of this study included the choice to conduct experimental mixed-methods research with underage participants, the decision to only conduct research in public school settings with at least two high schools and two middle schools with successful choral music programs, choosing a very limited time frame of one week between the intervention and follow up, and the decision to limit my research to choral music and exclude instrumental music.

Definitions of Key Terms

Key terms used throughout this research study include mental health, wellbeing, and mental illness, which for this study are defined as follows using the definitions outlined by the World Health Organization. These include Mental Health, Wellbeing, and Mental Illness (also called Mental Disorder).

Mental Health

- Mental health is a state of mental wellbeing that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn and work well, and contribute to their community. It has intrinsic and instrumental value and is a basic human right. (WHO, 2025b, para. 1)

Wellbeing

- Wellbeing is a positive state experienced by individuals and societies. Similar to health, it is a resource for daily life and is determined by social, economic and environmental conditions. Wellbeing encompasses quality of life and the ability of people and societies to contribute to the world with a sense of meaning and purpose. (WHO, 2025c, para. 1)

Mental Illness (also called Mental Disorder)

- A mental disorder is characterized by a clinically significant disturbance in an individual's cognition, emotional regulation, or behaviour. It is usually associated with distress or impairment in important areas of functioning. There are many different types of mental disorders. Mental disorders may also be referred to as mental health conditions. The latter is a broader term covering mental disorders, psychosocial disabilities and (other) mental states associated with significant distress, impairment in functioning, or risk of self-harm. (WHO, 2025a, para. 1)

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

To provide context for the present study, this literature review examines several areas of research related to adolescent mental health, music participation, and psychological intervention strategies. The chapter begins with an overview of adolescent mental health and the role schools may play in supporting student wellbeing. It then explores research on music participation and psychological wellbeing, including studies on group singing, music engagement, and the broader relationship between music and mental health outcomes. The review continues with literature examining the emotional and psychological processes involved in music participation, including emotion regulation and music performance anxiety. Next, psychological frameworks relevant to the present study—particularly Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), and broader emotion regulation theory—are discussed. The chapter also reviews research on music-based mental health interventions and the potential role of music educators in supporting student wellbeing within classroom settings. The literature review concludes by summarizing the key findings from these areas of research and identifying gaps that the present study seeks to address.

Adolescent Mental Health and Wellbeing

Mental health is broadly defined as a state of wellbeing that allows a person to cope with the stresses of life, with wellbeing referring to a positive physical or emotional state that allows a person to experience meaning and purpose (WHO, 2025b; WHO, 2025c). Nearly one in seven people globally living with a mental health disorder or mental illness, a significant disturbance in behavior, cognition, or emotion regulation which can cause long-term suffering and severely disrupt daily life (WHO, 2025b).

While a variety of effective prevention and treatment options exist, most people do not have access to effective care for a variety of reasons (WHO, 2025b). From statistics gathered by WHO (2025b), this included 72 million children and adolescents with anxiety disorders, 23 million children and adolescents with depression, and 3.8 million adolescents with bipolar disorder. The CDC (2024) data from the United States showed that nearly one in 5 children ages 3 to 17 had ever been diagnosed with a condition related to their mental, emotional, or behavioral health. While the data indicated that more than half (55%) of adolescents in the U.S. discussed their mental or emotional health with a health care professional, the CDC (2025) still acknowledged gaps in treatment to support youth.

Music Participation and Psychological Wellbeing

Music's effect on mental health has been the subject of contentious study for decades, from studies that make claims about certain types of music increasing mental health disorders, to findings of the exact opposite (McFerran et al., 2013; Reagon et al., 2016; Sakka & Juslin, 2018; Till et al., 2016). Sakka and Juslin (2018) found that depressed individuals had lower levels of happiness in a memory condition experiment, essentially showing that the most severely depressed individuals struggled to achieve happiness even when listening to music designed to evoke positive memories, a condition known as anhedonia or an inability to experience pleasure. Till et al. (2016) explored 50 preselected songs, including 25 songs related to suicide, to determine if preference for those songs were a risk factor for suicide. The findings after surveying 943 participants were contradictory, with preferences for sad music positively associated with psychoticism, but enjoyment of suicide songs negatively associated with risk of suicide. There are inconsistent results in studies involving adolescents, music, and mental health, especially regarding music preferences, as well as a overall lack of experimental data available in

this field of study (McFerran et al., 2013; Reagon et al., 2016). Inconsistencies across eighteen studies suggest that group singing promotes positive mental health benefits, but the studies across various methodologies lacked control and depth (Reagon et al., 2016). Youth orchestra participants in a pilot study by Baker et al. (2020) reportedly showed “growth mindset” thinking in addition to self-reported benefits of developing musical skills, non-musical social and organizational skills, emotional intelligence, and the development of friendships. The inconsistencies across these findings highlight the need for more rigorous experimental research examining how specific music-based interventions may influence psychological outcomes.

Wellbeing and Music Education

The idea of incorporating evidence-based wellbeing practices such as mindfulness into music education classrooms has been the subject of multiple studies over the last few decades, showing significant evidence of the benefits of doing so, but little agreement on how to implement these integrations seamlessly (Edgar, 2012; Murphy, 2020). Some research explores the benefits of simply participating in ensembles, such as Carver (2019) who looked at musical and social benefits and found evidence of improved relationship skills and self-management. Walls and Baker (2023) further explored these benefits and showed that active participation in music ensembles made adolescents with a history of suicidal ideation feel less suicidal than they were prior to participation in that ensemble.

When looking at music educators, Cole (2021) found that many elementary music educators had concern about supporting student mental health through music, but most felt unprepared to provide support due to a lack of consistent preparation both in their education and in teacher pre-service training. Dirks (2020) explored music educator experiences with trending increases in adolescent anxiety and depression and found that music educators expressed a desire

for more training to help them be aware of how to notice and respond to student mental health concerns.

The negative shift in mental health since the Covid-19 pandemic in adolescents included significant increases in sadness or hopelessness, consideration of suicide attempts, and actual suicide attempts (Jones et al., 2022). These increases in symptoms have inspired additional conversations and studies regarding the interactions between student mental health and that of teachers in the classroom, with researchers like Dirks (2023) relaying the importance of interpersonal trust between students and teachers to ensure all feel welcomed and supported in the music making space. Covid-19 and the shift to mostly online music-making contexts led to an increase in the need for mental wellbeing support due to the isolation, but also allowed researchers such as Enright (2021) to examine the benefits of ensemble participation in both online and in-person contexts, with both types of communal music-making showing significant value for the wellbeing of young adults. The Covid-19 pandemic was experienced as a trauma by many adolescents, necessitating further training on trauma-informed practice for educators (Jones et al., 2022).

When considering trauma in music education contexts, music educators may feel a pull towards the idea of “saving” the young person in their classroom, leading the educator to see only the trauma and not the whole person behind the trauma-reflective behaviors (Hibbard & Price, 2023). Music educators can practice trauma-informed care by utilizing universal compassionate approaches that seek to build a relationship with the student to understand how their background is informing their behavioral choices, and work with the student to create a safe environment where the student is empowered to make more positive choices (Hibbard & Price, 2023).

Group Singing Benefits

Even without targeted interventional strategies, the perceived benefits of group singing share common themes across research methodologies and fields, including both musical and extra-musical benefits. Bartolome (2013) used semi-structured ethnographic interviews of members, faculty, and parents of the Seattle girls' choir to explore the value of music engagement in the lives of students, with personal and social benefits emerging as themes in addition to the musical and external benefits. The research for adult participants has similar findings, with Batt-Rawden and Andersen (2020) finding singing to provide social connection, joy, sense of identity, and self-esteem in adult women, some of whom described singing as essential to survival and noted positive physical effects ranging from breathing to pain reduction.

Campbell et al. (2022) compiled a narrative review of 19 articles about group singing and wellbeing, with most studies finding that group singing is correlated with increased psychological and physiological wellbeing in people with and without chronic health conditions, with a more pronounced positive effect on those with depression and anxiety. Williams et al. (2018) looked at 13 articles measuring mental health and/or wellbeing outcomes of group singing and found significant improvement with medium to large effect sizes with converging themes of enjoyment, improved emotional state, enhanced self-confidence, and a sense of belonging. A similar review by Daykin et al. (2018) found reliable evidence of positive wellbeing effects of music and singing in adults, while highlighting a few areas where research is lacking, such as sub-groups of populations including marginalized communities, with most current studies being comprised primarily of relatively well-educated white women. Mindfulness, a mental state of being present in the moment, increased significantly after both choral singing and listening to music in an experimental study by Lynch and Wilson (2018), with

a greater effect size and confidence interval in the choral singing group. Wellbeing through engagement in music is beneficial to older adults, as outlined by Matherne (2022) who found significantly higher overall wellbeing, positive emotion, relationships, and meaning in the New Horizons community music ensemble participants who were in the 65+ age group.

Group Music Making Compared to Other Activities

Not all studies of the benefits of group music making were exclusive to choir, or even exclusive to the field of music. Dingle et al. (2017) looked at both group singing and creative writing as arts-based therapies for mentally ill adults, and found a short-lived increase in positive emotions, as well as a longer lasting decrease in negative emotions in all participants in both the healthy control group and the mentally ill participants. Studies by Stewart and Lonsdale (2016) and Lonsdale and Day (2021) compared group singing to other group and solo activities, and found that in general leisure activities that involved mastery of a skill and a sense of accomplishment had a positive effect on wellbeing, with that effect being more pronounced in the group activities, but group activities such as team sports and band seemed to have similarly positive effects when compared to group singing.

Music Listening versus Music Participation

The group activity aspect of the prior research may be related to the research showing that participating in music as a group activity is much more strongly correlated with psychological wellbeing than passive listening to music (Boyd et al., 2021; Livesey et al., 2012; Moss et al., 2018). Boyd et al. (2021) compared listening and group choral singing and found that while both interventions had a positive effect on mood and self-esteem, the group that participated in group singing had a stronger effect and it lasted longer than listening alone. Livesey et al. (2012) and Moss et al. (2018) had similar findings, with Livesey showing an

emphasis from many participants of music participation adding meaning and purpose to their lives, and Moss conducting a massive survey of 1,779 healthy participants who also indicated themes of positive improvements in psychological and physiological health. Chin and Rickard (2014) explored the idea of emotion regulation in relation to music engagement and wellbeing, finding that the path of mediation was dependent on specific emotion regulation strategies used and individual musical engagement, with different engagement strategies yielding either positive or negative wellbeing outcomes. In higher education, Tahirbegi (2023) found that music students valued collaborative ensembles for not only musical skill improvement, but also for providing an environment that allowed them to maintain a positive socio-emotional climate and regulate their emotions within the ensemble.

Emotion and Music

One aspect of music and mental health literature that looks beyond the surface level involves how music is largely understood to induce emotions ranging from basic to complex in even passive listeners, but the mechanism by which this phenomenon occurs is less certain and seems to involve not only perceptual and cognitive input, but also aesthetic criteria filtering that is unique to the individual (Juslin, 2016). Trainor and Schmidt (2012) hypothesize that one part of this emotional connection can be linked to preverbal communication with infants, which generally uses a musical tone-based cadence, and the authors argue that music “evolved alongside emotion in humans” (p. 312), with physiological evidence that emotions are directly elicited by music. The emotions from music exposure appear to affect different brain regions and correlate with a patient’s emotional state, with perception studies reporting changes in the cerebellum and anterior cingulate cortex, and induction studies reporting changes in a larger number of brain regions including the amygdala, frontal cortex, ventral striatum, hippocampus,

insula, and anterior cingulate cortex (Juslin & Sakka, 2018; Moffic, 2008). Mu et al. (2024) investigated how wearable technology can be integrated with music emotion recognition through their Bimodal Emotion database, which shows promise for future exploration of physiological signals from wearable devices to better understand the connection between music and emotion.

The use of music to regulate emotions also has a strong research basis, with findings regarding genre preference indicating that more energetic and rhythmic music such as pop, hip-hop, and funk are associated with positive emotion up-regulation as well as negative emotion down-regulation, with results indicating different emotion regulation strategies depending on the specific musical style (Cook et al., 2019). In later stages of life, emotion regulation through music is associated with the idea of positive solitude, or the ability to dedicate time to an enjoyable or meaningful experience without the requirement of the company of other people (Bachman et al., 2022).

This idea of emotion regulation through music carries a unique role when brought into music education spaces, with Lines and Bartels (2023) highlighting a need for music educators to allow space for the unexpected, create opportunities for shared power and meaningful actions, and experience vulnerability. Campbell (2022) stated that all teachers are ambassadors of music, and how they harness that power can assist students with mood regulation, stress relief, building community, and understanding the world around them. These strategies may be especially important for children who have experienced abuse and neglect, as their experiences indicate a strong need for interpersonal stability and establishing healthy regulatory behaviors including emotion regulation and connection through music (Teggelove, 2023).

Performance Practices Regarding Emotion

While it may or may not ameliorate Music Performance Anxiety, the role of emotion in musical performance takes on a high level of significance, with both performers and listeners preferring an emotionally expressive performance for aesthetic value, with components such as facial and body expression, vocal and instrumental timbre, and technical cues such as tempo, volume, and articulation working synergistically to communicate emotion from the performer to the audience (Juslin & Lindström, 2016). Rocke et al. (2022) emphasized the importance of societal and communal contexts when considering how to communicate the emotional factors of composed music, as the specific performance practices of genre and style may dictate the most appropriate way to incorporate emotion into a performance as a way of connecting the individual performer and their experience to the setting in which the composer lived, creating emotion-driven links between modern humanity and the humanity of the past.

Woody (2000) discovered that the majority of college musicians received more instruction on expressive and emotive musical performance in private lessons than in music ensembles, with many educators focusing on verbal instruction on expressive musicianship rather than modeling and providing practical opportunities to practice. An example of more practical emotion modeling in jazz improvisation was outlined by Davis (2023), who found that when jazz musicians have a goal of fostering empathy when improvising, they engage in deeper emotional understanding with one another and with the music, leading to higher level thinking skills such as seeing the music from the perspective of their musical colleague.

In choral music, the additional component of lyrics bring a new way of expressing emotion, which must be carefully considered in the context of the full score with historical and musical understanding, usually through the process of score study by the conductor so they can

then assist the choir with not only the foundational music ideas, but also in bringing the deeper emotional understanding to the performance (Marvin, 2019). Group singing as a means of social connection leads to not only personal growth but also highlights the role of emotion within music as being communal rather than strictly individual for performers, with the choral music performers seeing their experience as affirming a collective emotional musical journey (Davidson et al., 2024). Improvement in emotion regulation through music performance has potential to improve wellbeing outcomes but may be more effective when also incorporating psychology-based techniques such as those found in Cognitive Behavior Therapy and Dialectical Behavior Therapy (Chin & Rickard, 2014; Chwalek & McKinney, 2015; Dvorak et al., 2022; Razaghi et al., 2019).

History of Mental Health Research in Music Education

When exploring the connections between mental health, music, and education, an understanding of the experiences of children and adolescents with mental illness and of the human physiology of the brain can contribute to an overall understanding of the complexity involved in creating interventions for wellbeing.

Children and adolescents may experience more than one type of anxiety disorder at the same time, for example generalized anxiety disorder and specific phobia, or panic disorder and music performance anxiety (Dacey et al., 2016). Additionally, a number of school-aged children and adolescents experience anxiety related to school attendance, parental separation, bullying, social interactions, and a variety of other school specific factors (Csoti, 2003). Children and adolescent rates of depression have also increased in recent years, but the majority of depression research until recently was conducted solely on adult samples, without regard to age-related differences experienced by younger populations with depression (Abela & Hankin, 2008).

In adult mental health research, there is a growing body of research in the fields of biomedical understanding and neuroscience, with these changes further illuminating the complexities related to the development of effective treatment modalities. The biomedical understanding of the cause of mental illness such as depression and anxiety has been hypothesized and questioned for over 50 years, as acknowledged by Jauhar et al. (2023). In addition to widely known serotonin, other neurotransmitters (chemicals that allow the brain to communicate with the body) such as dopamine and oxytocin play a role in mental health, but scientific understanding of that role is still evolving (Berke, 2018; Sheffler et al., 2023).

While the biological and neuroscientific understanding of neurotransmitters continues to evolve, so has the study of neuroscience and music since the 1990s, with potential ongoing applications of the research to future interventional studies. Neuroscience and education research in the last few years has been moving towards a more naturalistic and ecologically valid paradigm that prizes innovative thinking without sacrificing experimental rigor (Tervaniemi, 2023). Pantev and Herholz (2011) explored the relationship between music and brain functions including cognition, emotion, and memory to investigate brain interactions such as positive induction of cortical plasticity by means of musical training, with possible applications to neurorehabilitation. Further research by Trainor and Zatorre (2015) showed cognitive evidence that human brains generate musical expectations, and our interactions with music that engage with those expectations can have both cognitive and emotional effects. Musical engagement has been identified as a potential adaptive psychological tool to positively contribute to five commonly recognized characteristics of wellbeing; positive emotion, relationships, engagement, achievement, and meaning (Croom, 2011).

Social neuroscience in music is still in the early stages of exploration, with Greenberg et al (2021) looking at the COVID-19 pandemic through the lens of how people turned to music as a way to connect almost immediately during the shutdown. Their research showed the overlap between music production and the social processes of human interaction such as mentalization, empathy, and synchrony, along with highlighting the role of oxytocin, neural reward centers, and the immune system. Geist and Geist (2012) connected the idea of music neuroscience, music therapy, and early childhood education, suggesting that rhythm-based protocols could have important implications on attention and learning in early childhood.

The availability of safer methods of studying the brain in both adults and children has opened new avenues to research the neuroscience of music, with strong implications for interdisciplinary research linking psychology, neurology, clinical practice, music performance, education, and therapy to continue to see science-based progress in all related disciplines (Altenmüller et al., 2012). Development of new technologies related to health that have potential applications to music-based therapies also show promise for supporting evidence-based treatments based on individual needs and allowing researchers the ability to develop standardized interdisciplinary music-based interventions, including avenues to improve emotion regulation (Agres et al., 2021).

Music Performance Anxiety (MPA)

With these higher levels of mental health disorders in competitive musicians, performance anxiety tends to become a focal point, as it is a form of anxiety that nearly every performer experiences at some point (Kenny, 2011). This anxiety can be rooted in a number of contributing factors, with vulnerability being the most prominent in vocal performance settings; each human voice being unique can lead to shame and a lower sense of self-esteem due to

comparison and a fear of vulnerability (Schei, 2023). Music performance anxiety is correlated with both social phobia and perfectionism in adolescents and young adults, with factors such as parental criticism and self-doubt being predictive of performers experiencing music performance anxiety (Dobos et al., 2019). Performance anxiety is experienced more frequently by female students and may decrease as students feel more confident as their self-perception of their musical instrument improves over time, with music performance anxiety being experienced at similar rates in young performers in both regular music programs and more intensive performance-based programs (Calisir & Egilmez, 2022; Tardif et al., 2024).

Herman and Clark (2023) called for a reconceptualization of music performance anxiety, with critiques of the limited efficacy of present interventions indicating a need to better understand the etiology of MPA and provide proactive coping strategies rather than the current approach of treating the presenting symptoms. Cornett (2024) further expanded the discussion of MPA to include the need for individualized, culturally responsive practices of anxiety management that are inclusive of musicians of color, musicians who are neurodivergent, have disabilities, or have experienced trauma, and students with different cultural or musical backgrounds. When MPA is approached from a biopsychosocial model of challenge and threat, it may show physiological changes that could help researchers develop more effective regulatory mechanisms such as breathing modifications (Guyon et al., 2020). Practical interventions for emotion regulation may be informed by Gross (1998) and Gross and Thompson (2007) in developing stages of emotional process and utilizing the knowledge of those stages to regulate and modulate emotions through both prevention and intervention (Kaleńska-Rodzaj, 2021).

Interventions for MPA have changed significantly throughout history, with modalities ranging from cognitive and behavioral interventions to pharmacological treatment and

complementary health interventions, with a lack of clear evidence of effectiveness and with notable difficulties in implementation due to lack of psychological training for the higher education music staff responsible for educating students struggling with MPA (Blair & van der Sluis, 2022). Significant advancements since 2018 in the treatment of MPA includes the acknowledgment of the social aspects, the increase in quasi-experimental research design looking at MPA, and a variety of new interventions being introduced, with limitations including a lack of experimental studies with control groups (Gómez-López & Sánchez-Cabrero, 2023).

Specific interventions for MPA fall under several categories; cognitive and behavioral interventions are used widely for general anxiety problems, with a positive medium effect size finding overall, indicating overall effectiveness but the researchers acknowledged the potential limiting factor of a lack of heterogeneity in the research (Faur et al., 2023).

Interventions such as self-modelling may be effective for young musicians, indicating that teaching students strategies they can utilize independently may be beneficial (MacAfee & Comeau, 2020). Conversely, brief group interventions based on symptom reduction and relaxation strategies are moderately significant for adult community musicians experiencing MPA, which may indicate the potential for effective reduction of MPA even in group interventions (Kenny & Halls, 2018). Some interventions designed to improve performance under pressure improved self-efficacy but did not demonstrate any improvement in musical performance from participants struggling with MPA (Lubert & Gröpel, 2022). In analyzing a variety of emotion regulation strategies for effectiveness in reducing MPA, Kalenska-Rodzaj (2023) uncovered differences in effectiveness depending on individual characteristics of musicians and the structure of their temperament, indicating that a variety of potential strategies may be necessary to effectively reduce MPA in all affected musicians. That said, as Gao and

Kuehne (2025) reported, music educators specifically are often not fully aware of the impact MPA has on their students and how it affects varying groups of their students.

Potential Pitfalls of Music Participation

While group music participation has been shown to have powerful effects, two studies explored the potential downsides of music ensemble participation. Rawlings and Espelage (2020) explored homophobic name-calling in youth music ensemble participants and found that despite mixed reporting regarding frequency of being the target of homophobic slurs and bullying as an ensemble member, being involved in a music ensemble may be protective of mental health outcomes. Conversely, Kegelaers et al. (2021) found that in musicians who have chosen to pursue music either as a career or as a college major have significantly higher levels of mental health disorders, with anxiety and depression being inversely correlated with psychological resilience, potentially indicating a need for specific interventions to build resilience in young musicians who may be planning to pursue music professionally.

Within music and general education, when the focus turns to mental health some negative stigma and inaccurate information based on information that has since been debunked becomes part of the larger discussion. Mental health stigma tends to dehumanize mental illness, which can be combatted through sharing stories, education, awareness, promoting a positive atmosphere, and open discussion (Elbulok-Charcape et al., 2021). In education, there can be a push towards “toxic positivity” or only allowing for positive emotions while the negative feelings are suppressed (Prothero, 2021). Prothero (2021) found that ignoring negative emotions appeared to reduce morale in educators and students, leading to feeling unheard and even guilty.

While positive music is typically seen as a way to improve wellbeing, in individuals with bipolar disorder, who experienced more intense complex negative emotions and greater

emotional reactivity, Choppin et al. (2016) found a greater experience of tension in an experimental design involving listening to positive music. Sakka and Juslin's (2018) study showed that positive music alone was not enough to make a difference for the individuals struggling with their mental health, indicating that more research may be needed to determine strategies to improve outcomes. Pierce (2012) called for an infusion of health and wellness into the music curriculum to combat the significant mental and physical health challenges faced by high-level musicians, exploring the literature related to promoting the shift to a healthier mindset.

Psychological Frameworks for Emotion Regulation

Understanding how individuals recognize, interpret, and regulate their emotional experiences is central to developing effective mental health interventions and building an overall healthier mental outlook in musicians and non-musicians alike. Psychological research has produced several frameworks describing the processes through which emotions arise and how individuals can modify emotional responses in adaptive ways (Reed et al., 2023). These frameworks provide the theoretical basis for many widely used therapeutic approaches designed to reduce anxiety, improve emotional awareness, and strengthen coping strategies. Because the present study incorporates techniques derived from established psychological practices, it is important to examine the foundational frameworks that inform these approaches before considering their potential application within music education settings (Gobat et al., 2021).

Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT)

Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) is the most commonly available form of psychotherapy available to adults and adolescents, and the use of CBT for academic and behavior problems has been documented as one method to assist anxious individuals with

cognitive distortions (Hintze, 2002). An overview of systematic reviews of CBT for youth anxiety by Byrne et al. (2023) found that direct treatment of the youth with anxiety was the most effective treatment format, with less effectiveness seen in parent-only and family-based CBT. An overview of transdiagnostic CBT by Norton et al. (2025) indicated that while there is a need to better understand comorbid diagnoses in adults with negative emotion disorders to provide more effective therapeutic intervention targeting not only depression and anxiety but also specific comorbidities found within the individual clients, the added costs involved may be prohibitive and the relative improvements in comorbid conditions may not provide sufficient benefit related to the additional cost. When CBT is tailored to youth suffering from depression, it frequently includes goals of self-empowerment for both the youth and their parents, with negative views of self being challenged and explored in order to provide tools that improve a variety of symptoms of depression, including educating the depressed individual to recognize and correct cognitive distortions such as perfectionism and catastrophizing (Reinecke & Ginsburg, 2008). Other CBT based interventions used for cognitive distortions include thought forecasting and hypothesizing/guessing, both of which involve adolescents identifying automatic thoughts and beliefs about potential future situations or feelings in order to determine how closely those feelings and thoughts match the most realistic potential scenario (Merrell, 2008). In college-aged music students with social anxiety, both cognitive behavioral therapy and emotion focused therapy were effective in improving emotional regulation, but CBT was more effective on issues related to thoughts and cognitive distortions (Razaghi et al., 2019).

Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)

Dialectical Behavior Therapy is a therapeutic modality considered by some to be an offshoot of CBT that focuses on building skills such as self-analysis, mindfulness, interpersonal

effectiveness, distress tolerance, and emotion regulation (Linehan, 2014). Originally developed by Marsha Linehan (2014) as a means of treating Borderline Personality Disorder and chronic suicidality in women, DBT has since additionally been found to be an effective treatment modality for autistic adults with co-occurring mental health disorders, college students, trauma survivors, and at-risk adolescents (Bemmouna et al., 2021; Cornwall et al., 2021; Fiorillo & Fruzzetti, 2015; Lothes et al., 2019; Muhomba et al., 2017; Ricard et al., 2013; Ritschel et al., 2021; Smith et al., 2018; Zapolski et al., 2022). More recent research by Chapman and Hope (2020) outlined the direct and indirect potential for DBT skills to reduce multiple components of emotional dysregulation, particularly when used in more flexible settings for clients who found CBT invalidating.

DBT's application in youth contexts, including adolescents with significant behavioral challenges, has been shown to improve executive functioning with a particularly strong improvement in emotion regulation (Smith et al., 2018). DBT infused group intervention also showed significant improvement compared to more standard therapeutic interventions in adolescents assigned to Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs (DAEP) in which students have documented significant behavioral struggles (Ricard et al., 2013). In college students, DBT significantly improved emotion regulation and reduced dysfunctional coping such as self-harm when used in group skills training programs, both in students with mental health struggles and in the general student population when looking at test anxiety (Lothes et al., 2019; Muhomba et al., 2017).

Music therapy interventions utilizing DBT skills have shown promising results in adults with serious mental illness, particularly in improving participation in therapy, although research

regarding how to implement these skills in music therapy settings is limited (Chwalek & McKinney, 2015; Dvorak et al., 2022).

Due to the increased risks and reported limited effectiveness of CBT-based skills in both the autistic population and in individuals with BPD, finding techniques that pull from several modalities may be more effective as a universally implemented strategy, particularly for emotion regulation (Hayrynen, 2022). Clifford et al. (2022) found that a combination therapy based on Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) and DBT reduced aggression and improved anger coping and positive social support seeking in children with autism spectrum disorders. Another unique feature of DBT when compared to CBT is that DBT was designed to include group therapy as both a means of positive social interaction and community building, making this modality better suited to incorporating in large group settings (Hayrynen, 2022; Linehan, 2014).

Despite the demonstrated effectiveness of CBT and DBT in clinical settings, these therapeutic approaches typically require specialized training that most educators do not receive (Sauerland, 2021). At the same time, teachers regularly encounter students experiencing anxiety, emotional dysregulation, and other wellbeing challenges within classroom environments (Walls & Baker, 2023). This gap has led researchers to consider how selected strategies from established psychological frameworks might be adapted into educational contexts in ways that support student wellbeing without requiring clinical intervention (Gobat et al., 2021). In music education settings, where emotional expression, breathing control, and reflective engagement with artistic material are already embedded in classroom practice, these adapted strategies may be particularly compatible with existing instructional structures (Walls & Baker, 2023).

Music-Based Mental Health Interventions

When developing effective interventions for mental health in music, an overview of techniques involving psychology, education, and music therapy can provide insight into proven techniques that can be adapted for specific circumstances. This research study builds on not only a knowledge of music, but also an understanding of educational and clinical psychology and the potential benefits of applying the principles of Universal Design in Learning to wellbeing initiatives in classrooms (Edgar et al., 2023).

Utilizing a Universal Design for Learning model is one suggested method for incorporating care and social emotional learning into music classrooms, with an emphasis on building community while respecting individual voices and choices within music classrooms (Edgar et al., 2023). In many cases in education, a universal school-based approach to treating childhood and adolescent anxiety may benefit those whose anxiety disorders are either undetected or unreported, and therefore untreated, however there is not enough data on effectiveness or how to successfully implement either universal or targeted anxiety protocols in school settings (Angelosante et al., 2011). Spence (2008) indicated advantages of a universal approach to depression prevention in school settings, including avoidance of labeling effects, better participation, and the ability to target multiple risk factors and influence overall emotional wellbeing for all students.

Music in Groups with Mental Health Disorders

Children who grew up with multiple wellbeing risk factors frequently experience mental health disorders either as children or later in adulthood; therapies involving music are shown to be beneficial in many of these disorders (Haugwitz, 2021; Lesiak, 2017; Teggelove, 2023). Moula et al. (2020) found that incorporating music therapy and other arts-based therapies in

primary schools help to facilitate significant improvements in categories such as self-esteem and mood, and smaller improvements in categories such as depression and anxiety. Derrington (2012) discovered that music therapy in a school setting encouraged higher attendance in teenagers with complex emotional and behavioral issues, leading to an overall more productive learning experience.

While the focus of this research is on mental health in children and adolescents, some relevant literature on music therapy in adults encourages an emphasis on transdisciplinary neuroscience research to develop more effective treatments, with potential future applications to adolescent mental health research (Mitchell, 2023; Silverman, 2022). Haugwitz (2021) explored literature related to music therapy in the context of early detection of bipolar disorder, providing rationale for using music therapy in early treatment and prevention of bipolar disorder.

Mindfulness-based music therapy has been shown to be effective in achieving positive psychosocial benefits in individuals with both mental illness and chronic illness, indicating potential clinical implications for this population with both physical and mental health challenges (Lesiak, 2017).

Panteleeva et al. (2018) analyzed randomized controlled trials looking at the effect of music listening on anxiety in healthy individuals, with results showing a decrease in self-reported anxiety but no significant decrease in psychophysiological anxiety signals, despite some studies showing some effect of music listening on blood pressure, cortisol, and heart rate, potentially indicating a need for more complex interventions in addition to music listening for anxiety regulation. Janzen et al. (2019) built on listening with a strategy that involved a rhythmic vibration feedback device in addition to the music listening in a 5-week treatment course,

indicating that additional strategies along with the music listening interventions may have stronger positive effects on anhedonia in particular.

Adults struggling with recent grief who participated in group singing and social sessions had more stable symptoms of depression and levels of wellbeing and self-esteem in an experimental study by Fancourt et al. (2019), while the control group that did not participate in group singing or social sessions experienced increased depression and reduced wellbeing and self-esteem. A small study conducted by Foulkes (2021) during the COVID-19 pandemic found that even online participation in singing and mindfulness activities positively impacted anxiety and depression wellbeing levels, highlighting possibilities for music-based mental health intervention even in unconventional circumstances. Specific populations with a higher vulnerability to mental health disorders such as military veterans require careful consideration; Zoteyeva et al. (2016) surveyed Australian military veterans regarding their use of music to manage their emotional and cognitive struggles, finding a higher incidence of music use in those with more pronounced affective dysfunction. The research on a variety of populations and ages connecting the power of music-based mental health interventions in multiple settings provides a strong foundation establishing the potential effectiveness of music-based interventions in ensembles with diverse participants.

Music Education Context and Teacher Capacity

Music education preparation programs contain many components, and vary widely by university, with some schools offering a number of supplementary courses related to the more difficult or sensitive issues that may arise while educating young musicians, and other schools focusing more on the musical aspects of the educational process.

Adults who chose to pursue music education as a career tend to fall into two distinct dispositional categories: those who identify as music educators first, with a sub-identity regarding the specifics of their art, and those who view themselves specifically as a musician/artist first and educator second, with the first group being generally more affirming and effective educators (Popow, 2017). Most educators have distinctly different socioeconomic and educational backgrounds when compared to the student population they serve, with many educators expressing a feeling of inadequate preparation for urban teaching and cultural issues surrounding the education settings they now teach in (Doyle, 2012). This difference in educator experience and the life experiences of the students introduces a need for trauma-informed pedagogy in music, with educators using the principles of empowerment, choice, collaboration, safety, and trustworthiness to build an environment where students can experience inclusivity and peace (Sauerland, 2021).

Steele Royston (2017) explored how teachers can best behave towards students to achieve a feeling of safety and trust while also improving classroom achievement. She concluded that positive communication between the student and teacher that avoids judgment while showing empathy and respect while appropriately managing personal emotions were indicated thematically through the literature review and student survey. Escalante (2020) found that many undergraduate music education students initially struggled with exploring sociological concepts, but the use of interactive activities and providing safe opportunities for self-expression may facilitate more positive dispositions towards social issues. A practical model for fostering emotionally safe learning environments for music students was introduced by Hendricks et al. (2014) in a literature review that encouraged teacher attitudes to nurture trust while also fostering purpose-driven musical mastery and self-actualization.

Intersectionality and Mental Health Risk

In music, as in other fields of education, there are ongoing discussions regarding teaching the whole person, with many of those discussions touching on the topic of intersectionality, a concept that describes people who struggle with multiple types of inequity, from poverty to race to gender and sexuality to disability and trauma, in which the effects of each struggle are magnified and affect music educators as they work to support the students entrusted to their care (Hammel & Hourigan, 2023). Students with intersectional identities are disproportionately affected by mental illness, indicating a need for culturally responsive practices when designing interventions (Salvador & Culp, 2022; Taylor & Calaham, 2024).

Salvador and Culp (2022) addressed the need for critical self-reflection of personal biases by each individual educator in order to allow students from every culture and background to feel safe and valued, providing an education based on Universal Design, culturally responsive practices, and trauma-informed education. The National Association for Music Education, a leading music education organization, supports the use of inclusive, culturally responsive curricular framework as a way to support music for all (Orzolek, 2023). Spruce (2024) acknowledges that concepts such as knowledge and literacy in music are frequently seen through a western classical music lens, and as such tend to diminish the value of knowledge outside of those ideals, and for educators to be truly social justice minded, they need to consider transformative remedies rather than simply affirmative.

These intersectional differences frequently result in unfair judgments about musical ability or competence due to the difference in not only background and unmet needs but also in educator biases and unintentional reinforcement of inequities (Hendricks & McPherson, 2023). When music educators embrace a more holistic view of the educational process through a co-

created learning space that embraces dissent while fostering autonomy, critical thinking, acceptance, and equity, students feel cared for and respected as whole people and reach new levels of self-actualization (Thomas-Durrell, 2023). In the field of music therapy, those intersectional differences can be a handicap to potential practitioners due to unconscious bias in the field as a whole, which has the potential to exclude music therapy practitioners who could be more effective in working with marginalized populations than those who hold more privilege (Myerscough & Wong, 2022).

Students in the LGBTQIA+ community, who frequently have additional intersectional aspects to their identity, benefit greatly from an affirming and welcoming music space that values empathy, communication, and honors the deep desire for a safe community that many LGBTQIA+ musicians do not have access to otherwise (Clayton, 2020; McManus & Carter, 2023). When identities such as LGBTQIA+ and disability intersect with the identity of being black, that desire for a safe community within music education is magnified as factors such as religion and ableism make other presumably safe spaces not only unsafe but sometimes outright threatening and dehumanizing (Gavieta, 2020; Taylor & Calaham, 2024).

Disability in music education is another aspect of intersectionality that frequently devolves into conversations about best practices, upholding standards and expectations, reasonable accommodation, and ultimately sets up a binary between students who can achieve and students who cannot rather than creating new music possibilities that work for every student (Churchill & Bernard, 2020). Attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities have historically been concerned with negative stereotypes and did not include input or data from children with disabilities, with many music educators expressing positive attitudes towards the children with disabilities but stating frustration with a lack of appropriate curriculum and training

(Jellison & Taylor, 2007). Wilson and McCrary (1996) found that a 7-week training course was not sufficient training for music education students to feel comfortable and competent in working with students with special needs. Carrico and Grennell (2022) stressed the importance of including the voices of disabled music educators in the dialogue about accessibility, with higher education holding the responsibility for implementing policies to ensure protection, equity, and adequate training of future music educators. Baker (2023) encouraged reflection on the importance of life-long access to musical engagement for people with disabilities, stressing the sociopolitical implications of being inclusive and integrating disabled individuals into mainstream music ensembles as well as the potential for that participation to fulfill unmet needs.

Neurodivergence, particularly Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), is another intersectional identity that has been researched more in a musical context in recent years, but has a long history that traces back to the mid-20th century with the advent of the field of music therapy, with parallels in the music and medical research circles as ASD was better understood (Gattino, 2022). While autism and neurodivergence is not a focal point of this study, adults on the autism spectrum “are at greater risk of co-occurring psychiatric disorders, self-harm and suicidal behaviors compared to the general population” (Bemmouna et al., 2021, p.4337), meaning those on the autism spectrum are overrepresented in populations dealing with mental illness compared to their neurotypical peers. More recent focus on ASD in music may be in part due to the phenomenon of some students with ASD possessing exceptional musical development because of neurological differences that make their auditory processing networks hear and process everyday sounds as music and recognize musical patterns most cannot, which in some ASD individuals reaches the level of Savant syndrome (Ockelford, 2018). When accommodating young neurodivergent children in music classrooms, there should be some structure, but also

room for choice and freedom without any pressure or value judgments (Chasar & Bakan, 2023). Music holds significant importance for many autistic individuals, creating opportunities to build positive self-esteem through social engagement which can be difficult for that population, as well as providing an outlet for using their voice to affirm other neurodivergent people and build community (Davies, 2022; Lehmann-Kuit et al., 2023).

These intersectional identities and the accompanying increased risk of mental illness further highlight the complex and difficult nature of developing effective music-based interventions (Khanolkar et al., 2023).

Summary of Literature and Research Gap

The data from the literature shows a clear need for further research establishing the connection between music and mental health, particularly when it comes to group music making in children and adolescents. The need for more experimental research is mentioned in both the McFerran et al. (2013) and Reagon et al. (2016) studies, and a review of the literature has not uncovered a substantial increase in experimental studies on the topic of music and mental health in either adults or children and adolescents, and virtually no experimental research on the subject has been conducted in an educational setting. The preponderance of group music making experience in the United States at the present time is within the public school system, making this lack of research even more pronounced.

The intersections of additional factors from race to gender to neurodivergence to disability increase the complexity of addressing mental health struggles, as those factors can not only increase the risk of mental illness, but also change the way it needs to be addressed in classrooms and in the world at large (Butler et al., 2025).

With the current state of mental health in the United States and in the world at large, educators would be remiss in their duties to their students if they did not make some attempt to support their students as they deal with depression, anxiety, or other common mental health struggles. Music educators carry a heavier burden of duty as they spend more time with students than most other educators do, and more of that time is outside of the classroom, some of it in high-pressure, high-stakes environments, and often dealing with emotionally heavy musical material.

With the right tools, that burden can become a privilege, with capable educators placing practical mental health coping tools into the hands of their student. These coping skills could encompass a number of psychology-based strategies, and would require very little training, and could be incorporated seamlessly into a music ensemble classroom without disrupting the flow of learning, while enhancing musicality and emotional depth.

Every educator shares the common purpose of helping equip their students for the future in some capacity, and music educators are no exception to this common goal. While others may view music as an “extra” activity, a beautiful art form, or as somehow being secondary to what are often referred to as the “core” classes, music educators know the power that resides within music education. From the earliest elementary music classrooms that help students learn coordination, rhythm skills that translate into math and fractions, and song analysis that prepares them for poetry, to the middle school choir that helps students deal with changing voices along with all of the other changes that happen to them during those years, to the high school marching band that teaches the importance of being part of a team and working towards goals that are bigger than yourself, everything a music teacher does prepares them for their lives in and outside of music. Music is already their safe space, and if this research data supports the initial

hypothesis of this study, music educators could prepare students to face their toughest battles with the correct tools, and an army of caring adults and peers standing behind them.

Chapter 3

Method

Research Design/Methodology

The research design was experimental mixed-methods, designed to determine the effectiveness of specific breathing and mindfulness techniques and specific emotion regulation techniques. These techniques were hypothesized to be useful in reducing anxiety and improving overall emotion regulation and wellbeing when integrated into choral music ensemble rehearsal practices, with additional determinations to be made regarding the effectiveness of these techniques in improving the quality of musical performance. This project incorporated techniques many music educators already employ, but with a better understanding of the psychology involved and specific wellbeing goals, to measure the effectiveness of these interventions and provide both evidence of effectiveness and a standard way to provide training on these interventions to music educators.

The research questions were examined using pretest and posttest surveys that included both researcher-designed items and established standardized measures. The researcher-designed items were pilot tested prior to the study to evaluate clarity and internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha used as a guideline during instrument refinement. In addition, the survey incorporated validated measures including the Generalized Anxiety Disorder Scale (GAD-7), the Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (SWEMWBS), and the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale-Short Form (DERS-SF). Additional qualitative data were collected through student interviews and open-ended surveys completed by choral music directors. Interview protocols for interviews with students were designed, with the researcher utilizing qualitative interview skills to include more questions as the interviews progressed.

Mixed Methodology Justification

Mixed methodology was selected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem by combining empirical quantitative data with qualitative insights into students' lived experiences (Wasti et al., 2022). Quantitative survey data allowed the study to examine measurable patterns in anxiety, wellbeing, and emotion regulation, while qualitative interviews provided insight into how students experienced and interpreted the interventions.

Mixed-methods approaches have increasingly been used in education research to address complex questions that cannot be fully understood through a single methodological approach (Lakshmi, 2019; Venkatesh et al., 2023). By integrating both forms of data, the present study was able to examine not only whether measurable changes occurred, but also how students perceived and described the effects of the interventions. Mixed methodology has been used in music education research, including King (2022) utilizing an online survey and semi-structured face-to-face interviews with music educators regarding supporting creative processes, approaching the topic from a pragmatic worldview and social constructivist philosophy.

The research questions outline the need for mixed methodology, as the quantitative surveys can provide statistical data regarding reduction in anxiety and improvement in wellbeing but can provide limited information on the mechanisms of how and to what extent that improvement is taking place in individual students. The qualitative interviews can provide personal experiences regarding the experimental interventions but are unable to provide an overall picture of the statistical effects. Further qualitative data from the open-ended choir director survey provides observational data from adult participants with musical training regarding improvements in musical performance, providing opportunities for less structured feedback to address research question three.

Research Paradigm

This study was guided by a pragmatic research paradigm, which emphasizes the use of methods most appropriate for addressing the research problem. The quantitative strand of the study reflected positivist principles, drawing on observation, measurement, and statistical analysis to examine patterns in anxiety, wellbeing, and emotion regulation across participants. The qualitative strand reflected interpretivist principles, recognizing that students' experiences with anxiety, emotion, and music are shaped by individual and social contexts (Wasti et al., 2022). Taken together, this pragmatic framework supported the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to examine not only whether measurable changes occurred, but also how students understood and experienced the interventions.

Researcher Positionality

The theoretical foundation of this research is based in part on my own personal experiences as a musician who experienced mental illness from a young age. Throughout my life, music played such a significant role that it has been difficult to put into words. While some people may hyperbolically state that music has saved their life, for me that statement rings deeply true. I grew up in an environment where expressing my emotions was not allowed unless that emotion was happy, and even then it had to be pleasant and even-tempered happiness. In music, however, I was allowed to be as expressive and emotional as I wanted to be, and being in that space allowed me to truly embrace the fullest parts of who I am.

My personal struggles with depression and anxiety began in young childhood, but at that time they remained untreated and largely ignored. I did not have safe adults to reach out to, I did not have positive coping skills, but what I did have was music. When I was singing, I was safe, I was a real person, I mattered. Through my childhood and young adulthood, music was the one

constant that allowed me to be fully and unapologetically myself and also allowed me to truly feel my emotions.

As a young teacher, my heightened empathy for students due to my own background made me a safe person for my students but also led to a variety of situations where I did not have the training or resources to properly support my students or myself. Additionally, I was not diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder until after I had been teaching for over a decade, and as such did not fully understand how to accommodate my own differences as an educator.

My perspective as a researcher is also informed by values related to equity, intersectionality, and the importance of understanding behavior within its broader emotional and social context. This perspective contributed to my belief that music may function as a meaningful space for emotional expression and support.

Additional elements that affected my positionality within this research relate to my belief that all people benefit from wellbeing initiatives, including therapeutic resources such as Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) and Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), but with an additional belief that individuals must choose to use these resources and tools such as self-assessment and taking personal accountability in order to reach improved states of wellbeing.

Research Questions

1. To what extent were psychology-informed breathing and cognitive reframing strategies implemented in secondary choral classrooms associated with changes in students' anxiety and wellbeing over time?
2. To what extent was a music-based emotion regulation intervention associated with changes in students' emotion regulation, emotion awareness, music–emotion engagement, and mood over time?

3. How did students and choir directors describe the usefulness and transferability of the interventions in choral, academic, and everyday contexts?

Setting

The setting of the study was two middle school and two high school choral music classrooms in Fort Bend Independent school district in the state of Texas. Fort Bend is a large school district located in the Houston, Texas area, with 12 high school campuses, 15 middle school campuses, 51 elementary campuses, and 5 specialized schools. The district is one of the most diverse in the nation with more than 79,000 students who speak more than 100 languages and dialects.

Participants

Participants were secondary choral music students in grades six through 12 enrolled in choir classes at two middle schools and two high schools in Fort Bend Independent School District in Texas. Across all timepoints, 700 surveys were collected, representing 363 unique participants. Of these participants, 335 provided baseline data and were included in the longitudinal analyses. Participants without baseline responses ($n = 29$) were excluded from analyses examining change over time but were retained in descriptive summaries of post-intervention responses. Thus, references to the total sample ($N = 363$) reflect all unique student participants who completed at least one survey, whereas analyses examining change over time were conducted on the longitudinal subsample ($n = 335$). Because linear mixed-effects models accommodate incomplete repeated-measures data, participants with partial survey completion were retained in the analyses when baseline data were available. Survey participation varied across timepoints, with 52.7% of participants completing three surveys, 26.0% completing two surveys, and 21.3% completing one survey.

An a priori power analysis was conducted using G*Power (Faul et al., 2007) to determine the minimum sample size required for a mixed 2 (group: experimental vs. control) \times 2 (time: pretest vs. posttest) repeated-measures ANOVA examining the group \times time interaction. Assuming a medium effect size ($f = .25$), $\alpha = .05$, statistical power = .80, a correlation among repeated measures of .50, and a nonsphericity correction of $\epsilon = 1$, the required total sample size was $N = 34$ participants. The obtained baseline sample of 335 participants substantially exceeded this threshold. Although the original design was conceptualized around a repeated-measures ANOVA framework, the final analyses were conducted using linear mixed-effects models, which allowed a greater proportion of repeated-measures data from both the experimental and control groups to be retained despite unequal participation across timepoints.

One middle school and one high school campus served as control sites; students at these campuses completed the pretest but did not receive any intervention. A second middle school and high school campus served as the experimental sites where the interventions were implemented. School sites were selected based on administrative approval and the willingness of choral music educators to support educational research. Experimental and control sites were selected to be as demographically similar as possible, and all four schools had established choral music programs. The experimental middle school serves as a feeder campus to the experimental high school, and the control middle school serves as a feeder campus to the control high school.

The participating schools were selected to be demographically comparable and reflect the broader diversity of Fort Bend Independent School District. The district serves a highly diverse student population representing numerous ethnic backgrounds and more than 100 languages. Participant-level demographic characteristics of the analytic sample are presented in Table 1.

Table 1*Participant Demographics*

Variable	Category	n	%
Gender Identity	Male	110	32.8
	Female	212	63.3
	Non-binary	7	2.1
	Choose not to disclose	6	1.8
Grade Level	6	89	26.6
	7	64	19.1
	8	42	12.5
	9	48	14.3
	10	33	9.9
	11	25	7.5
Ethnicity	12	34	10.1
	White (non-Hispanic)	54	16.1
	White (Hispanic)	53	15.8
	Black/African-American	42	12.5
	Asian/Pacific Islander	129	38.5
	Native American	3	.9
Socioeconomic Status	Other/mixed race	54	16.1
	High income	59	17.6
	Middle to high income	89	26.6
	Middle income	100	29.9
	Low to middle income	29	8.7
	Low income	6	1.8
Grade Point Average	Unsure/do not want to answer	52	15.5
	4.0 A+ student	93	27.8
	3.0-3.9 A and B student	166	49.6
	2.0-2.9 B and C student	35	10.4
	1.0-1.9 C student or below	3	.9
	Unsure/don't keep track	38	11.3
Self-identified mental health struggle	Yes	129	38.5
	No	206	61.5

Choral music was selected as the instructional context for this study due to the researcher's professional experience in choral music classrooms, the natural integration of breathing techniques within vocal warm-up practices, and the presence of song lyrics that facilitated the implementation of Intervention 3, emotion regulation through lyrical analysis.

Choir classes including students representing all gender identities and expressions were included in the study.

Secondary participants included the adult choir directors from the high school and middle school campuses selected as the experimental study sites. These participants included two choir directors (one female and one male) at the high school campus and two choir directors (one female and one male) at the middle school campus. These directors observed the implementation of the interventions during regular classroom instruction and three directors completed an open-ended survey approximately one month following the intervention period to report their observations regarding musicality and perceived changes in student performance anxiety.

Instruments

Pretest and Posttest Surveys

The instrument for the initial pretest survey included 21 researcher-designed items on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from “A bit like me” to “A lot like me” in three categories: Emotion (EMO), Music and Emotions (MAE), and Music and Anxiety (MOOD), along with basic demographic information. Example survey items included “I know what to do when I feel a difficult emotion.” and “I have had a strong emotional reaction to one or more songs we have performed or sung in choir.” This 21-item rating scale was pilot tested in an educational methods survey design course, detailed below under Validity. The pretest survey also included questions from the GAD-7, SWEMWBS, and DERS-SF for a total of 53 questions on the pretest survey. The pretest survey was administered to both the control group and the experimental group.

The posttest survey contained all questions from the pretest survey, with an additional five rating scale questions and one open-ended question for participants to add information regarding anxiety, positive emotions, emotion regulation, and the intervention techniques in their

own words. This survey was given only to the experimental group and was administered twice: once immediately after the intervention, and once approximately one week later. The pretest survey was administered a second time to a portion of the control group to obtain a sample from a second timepoint for the rating scales, however one of the two control schools declined to participate in the second administration.

Standardized Measures

General Anxiety Disorder 7. The GAD-7 is a questionnaire designed for practical self-report of anxiety in primary care settings and has been found to have internal consistency of Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.89$ (Löwe et al., 2008). The GAD-7 was designed as a screener for anxiety disorders in adolescents and adults to address a lack of self-report measures available leading to missed anxiety diagnoses in primary care settings (Löwe et al., 2008). This questionnaire was selected for inclusion in the survey due to the accessible language appropriate for adolescent users, high internal consistency including in the adolescent age group, and consistent use in research across disciplines (Goodman et al., 2024; Podina et al., 2025). Questions from the GAD-7 use a 4-point Likert scale to describe frequency of anxiety symptoms over the last two weeks from "not at all" to "nearly every day" and are represented in questions 22-28 in the pretest and posttest surveys.

Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale. The WEMWBS was developed as a rating scale of 14 only positively worded items to focus on the positive aspects of mental health, with results of UK validation testing showing good content validity with Cronbach's α score of 0.89 in student samples and 0.91 in the general population with lower social desirability bias than other similar scales (Tennant et al., 2007). The rationale behind positively worded items in contrast to rating scales with both positive and negative effects is to focus on

supporting mental health promotion initiatives in contrast to the stigma typically associated with the term mental health, and to avoid ceiling effects (data skewed toward positive outcomes) in population samples (Tennant et al., 2007). The shorter seven item version of this scale was selected to reduce the overall number of questions in the survey as it remained internally consistent in adolescent populations even in the shortened form, albeit with slightly less sensitivity to gender differences compared to the 14-item scale, and both the WEMWBS and SWEMWBS scales are frequently used measures for mental wellbeing, and was formatted similarly to the other chosen rating scales (Fat et al., 2017; Pakpour et al., 2024; Sarasjärvi et al., 2025). The SWEMWBS scale uses a 5-point Likert scale to describe frequency of overall positive wellbeing over the previous two weeks from “none of the time” to “all of the time” and is represented in questions 29-35 in the pretest and posttest surveys.

Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale Short Form. The DERS-SF is designed to measure the ability to regulate emotion comprehensively in adolescents and young adults, with results showing good internal consistency with a Cronbach’s alpha score of 0.89 for the 18-item version used in this study (Danasasmita et al., 2024). The DERS-SF was developed to capture problems significant enough to be associated with clinical diagnoses but is also frequently used to examine normal developmental processes and experiences, particularly in adolescents (Kaufman et al., 2015). This rating scale was selected for inclusion due to study results establishing validity in adolescent populations, similarity in structure to the other included rating scales, and consistent use in research related to emotion regulation (Mancinelli et al., 2024). The DERS-SF scale uses a 5-point Likert scale where participants rate their agreement with statements about emotion regulation from “almost never” to “almost always” and is represented in questions 36-53 in the pretest and posttest surveys.

Researcher-Designed Measures

In addition to standardized measures, the survey included a researcher-designed set of items intended to examine students' emotional awareness, connections between music and emotions, and perceived mood related to choir participation. These items were developed as the Music Emotion Subscale (MES) and included 21 items using a Likert-type response format. The MES was originally developed and pilot tested in an Educational Research Methods course on survey design at Auburn University (Appendix F). Development of the instrument included peer review by classmates, instructor feedback, and preliminary pilot testing to evaluate clarity of items and overall survey structure.

The MES items were organized into three conceptual domains: Emotion, Music and Emotion, and Mood. Items were written to reflect adolescents' experiences with emotional awareness, emotional responses to music, and perceived emotional effects of choir participation. For the dissertation study, the MES items were administered as part of both the pretest and posttest surveys. Responses were collected using a 4-point forced-choice Likert scale, ranging from "A bit like me" to "A lot like me," in order to reduce midpoint bias and encourage more discriminating responses. The survey was administered electronically through Qualtrics, which was accessible to participants through the district's 1:1 student laptop program.

As with all self-report measures, responses relied on participants' perceptions of their own experiences and therefore may be subject to recall bias or social desirability effects.

Student Interviews

Participants and their parents self-identified willingness to participate and consented/assented to do a follow-up semi-structured interview. Twenty-two were randomly selected with eight middle school participants and 14 high school participants. One interview

participant did not complete the baseline survey and was therefore excluded from baseline quantitative comparison analyses, resulting in 21 participants included in the interview subsample comparison. These interviews were scheduled to occur one week later at the follow up, however due to scheduling difficulties at the middle school campus the follow up visit at that site including the posttest and interviews actually occurred 13 days after the initial intervention. These interviews were approximately 8-15 minutes long and were conducted immediately after the second administration of the posttest. The parents of the minor participants were invited to join the interview either via zoom or in person and had the option of their choir director attending the interview in their place, with all participant interviews including one of the choir directors or a substitute teacher standing in for one of the choir directors and recorded by the researcher on zoom for the purpose of transcription. Parents and participants could opt out of the interview at any time with no penalties, but no participants or parents chose to opt out once they had been selected.

Choir Director Survey

Choir directors participated in a follow-up survey approximately one month after the initial intervention, which included 12 open-ended questions for the director to answer on their own time. This survey was on Qualtrics and was distributed to the four participating choir directors by email approximately four weeks after the initial intervention, with a request to complete the survey within one calendar week. Three of the four choir directors who received the survey completed it, a 75% completion rate. A follow-up email was sent nine days after the survey was distributed to any directors who had not yet completed the survey, with a second follow up email 17 days after the initial survey distribution.

Procedure

Baseline Data Collection

Both the control and experimental groups were given the initial pretest survey (see Appendix B). The control group was invited to complete the initial pretest survey a second time, with the high school control campus choosing to decline, and the middle school control campus completing the second administration of the pretest survey 10 days after the initial pretest survey.

Intervention Implementation

The experimental group received three mental health interventions (outlined in detail below and in Appendix A) integrated into their normal choir rehearsal immediately following administration of the pretest. The interventions were all introduced on the same class day as the class time of approximately 50 minutes per class was sufficient to take the pretest, complete the interventions, and take the posttest. If the class period had been 45 minutes or less, intervention 3 and the posttest would have been moved to the following class day. These three interventions, detailed in Appendix A, included a breathing technique called box breathing, a distress tolerance technique based on Cognitive Behavior therapy and Dialectical Behavior Therapy techniques that is referred to colloquially as “what would happen if” or “magnify”, and an emotional connection technique involving the song lyrics of one of the chosen pieces of literature the choir is already performing.

Intervention 1: Box breathing. Students were led through a standard choral music breathing technique known as abdominal breathing, where they were reminded that a deep breath should cause your abdomen to expand to make more room in the lungs for air. After 2-3 standard deep breaths, they were introduced to box breathing, which is an inhale for 4 beats, hold for 4 beats, exhale for 4 beats, hold for 4 beats, and repeat. Students were told that this technique is

useful for improving choral singing but can also be used in situations where the student is experiencing anxiety. Students were asked to picture a situation that is currently causing them anxiety, such as an upcoming test or performance, and led through several rounds of box breathing to help them regulate their anxiety about that situation. Students were asked to try using box breathing in their daily lives over the next week to see if it improves both their choral singing and their overall anxiety and wellbeing, and data including frequency of home use will be collected in the posttest. Box breathing as an intervention has applications to both music performance techniques and anxiety reduction and has been used in previous studies such as those by Balban et al. (2023).

Intervention 2: “Magnify” technique. This is a mindfulness-based technique that pulls from Cognitive Behavior Therapy and Dialectical Behavior Therapy techniques that is referred to colloquially as “what would happen if” or “magnify”, used to examine cognitive distortions and reframe them to be more in line with reality (Beck, 1995). Students were asked to think about an upcoming performance that may make them feel anxious. Students were asked to think about that performance and come up with a catastrophic scenario where everything that could possibly go wrong does go wrong. Students raised their hands and shared their catastrophic scenarios if they chose to, but as time was limited the researcher provided examples as well. As a class, we went through each potential catastrophe, making note of the likelihood of each event actually occurring. Next, I asked students to come up with a best-case scenario, where everything that could go well does go well. As a class, we went over what it would look like for this scenario to occur. Finally, we considered the “most likely” scenario, which students saw as being somewhere in between the best and worst options. Students were asked about their anxiety level regarding this performance both before and after the intervention.

Intervention 3: Emotion regulation through choral music literature. This intervention used choral music literature to help students identify emotions, connect those emotions to their own experiences, and use the choral music literature to experience and work through those emotions in a safe environment. Preparation for this intervention involved prior analysis by the researcher of the emotional content of choral music literature being used in the current choir setting, choosing one song per choir to analyze as a group. The choir read through the lyrics of the chosen song, then were asked to narrow down the emotions referred to in the song with prompting by the researcher due to her own analysis of the song and collaboration with the choir directors on their evaluation of the primary emotions in the chosen songs. Students were asked to recall an event in their own lives where they experienced that emotion, which they were not required to share out loud. With that emotion in mind, students read through the choral music piece, taking care to connect their own emotional experience with what they were reading and being reminded prior to the song that it is acceptable to feel their feelings while singing the piece. In some situations, the students had not yet learned all of the notes of the songs, so rather than having students sing the songs out loud, they were asked to read the lyrics and sing the songs in their heads, a common practice in choral music preparation. After the song, students were asked to reflect on whether their own experiences with that emotion changed their perspective on the song, and whether singing about the emotion helped them work through their own situations and regulate their feelings. Specific emotions targeted by the music included happiness, sadness or grief, anger, and fear. This intervention was developed by the researcher with thoughtful consideration of both her own prior research and that included in literature review (Chin & Rickard, 2014; Walls & Baker, 2023; Walls, 2023). An overview of the interventions can be found in Table 2.

Table 2

Intervention Overview

Intervention	Description	Psychological Basis
Box breathing	4in-4hold-4out-4hold breathing cycle	Physiological regulation
Magnify technique	Catastrophic vs. realistic thinking	CBT/DBT
Emotion music connection	Connect emotions to song lyrics	Emotion regulation

Follow-up Surveys

Immediately following the interventions, the students took the posttest survey (Appendix C) with additional questions regarding the effectiveness of the interventions along with the baseline questions 1-53 from the initial posttest survey. One week following the interventions, students in the experimental group took the posttest survey a second time, and a few students from the experimental group were selected out of those who volunteered to participate in interviews (Appendix D).

Interviews

The interview questions were set up to address research question one regarding anxiety in questions one through four, and to address research question two on emotion regulation in questions five through eight. Interviews were set up with students on the day of the initial intervention after being selected by shuffling the signed consent/assent forms that indicated approval for the optional interview and randomly selecting two to three students per class period after shuffling. Two students per class were selected with one as a backup interview in the event that one or more of the selected interview participants was absent or chose to be removed from the interview portion of the study. On the day of the interview, it took place in the choir director’s private office in their classroom, with the researcher and one other adult present, either the choir director or the choir director’s substitute for the day. Parents or guardians were invited to join the interview on a zoom call at their request, but none chose to attend the interviews.

In the anxiety portion of the interview, question one sets a baseline for the student's understanding of anxiety and asks the student if they have experienced it before, with sub-questions that can be asked about that anxiety experience. The next two questions ask the student to describe how they have used intervention one and intervention two in their daily life. Question four and the sub-questions are optional questions I can add into the discussion if I believe the student may have more to share but needs direction.

In the emotion regulation portion of the interview, question five sets a baseline for the student's understanding of emotions. Questions six and seven ask the student about their internal experience both during intervention three and afterward. Question 8 explores how the student has used intervention three in their own life since the initial intervention, with optional sub-questions that can be asked to clarify or prompt the student to share more details.

Choir Director Survey

One month following the intervention, the choir directors were emailed a link to an open-ended survey (Appendix E), which they were asked to complete within a week of receiving it. This survey was emailed to the four choral music directors at the experimental school sites approximately four weeks following the initial interventions. The survey was sent as a Qualtrics link to their school email, with a request that they complete the survey within seven calendar days. A reminder to complete the survey was emailed to the same email address nine days later, with a second reminder 17 days after the initial survey was emailed.

The questions on the open-ended survey relate to the choral music director's overall impression of the interventions, any communication regarding the interventions in the weeks following the initial intervention, observations on changes in anxiety and emotion regulation in

the students following the interventions, and observations on student emotional engagement in choral literature, musicality, and expression since the intervention.

Data Preparation and Screening

Because the survey data were collected longitudinally, the dataset contained multiple rows per participant across timepoints. Participant identification numbers were initially derived from choir folder numbers; however, it was later discovered that some folder numbers were reused within schools between multiple ensembles. To ensure accurate linkage of repeated survey responses, participant IDs were reviewed and adjusted using survey submission order and demographic consistency.

Data were screened for duplicate participant–timepoint entries. When duplicate responses were identified, the record with the most complete survey data and demographics consistent with baseline responses was retained. Demographic variables were collected at baseline and did not vary across timepoints. During data preparation, baseline demographic information was merged with the longitudinal dataset using participant identification numbers and verified across repeated observations to ensure consistent alignment for each participant.

During screening, participants with post-intervention surveys but no corresponding baseline survey were identified. Because the primary analyses examined change over time from baseline, these cases were excluded from longitudinal models but retained in descriptive summaries of post-intervention responses.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative data from the pretest and posttest surveys were analyzed using SPSS statistical software. Because participants completed surveys across multiple timepoints, linear

mixed-effects models (LMMs) were used to examine changes in outcome variables over time while accounting for repeated observations within individual participants. Participant ID was included as a random intercept to account for repeated observations nested within individuals. Time was modeled using the DaysSinceIntervention variable with a first-order autoregressive covariance structure [AR(1)]. Fixed effects included group (experimental vs. control), school level, time, and the interaction between group and time. Secondary models added demographic covariates including gender identity, grade level, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, GPA, and self-reported mental health status.

Descriptive statistics were also calculated for posttest perception items examining student-reported changes in anxiety, positive emotion, emotion regulation, perceived usefulness of the interventions, and use of the techniques outside of class. Table 3 outlines the alignment between research questions, data sources, and analytic procedures.

Table 3

Data Analysis Plan

Research Question	Data Source	Items	Data Type	Data Analysis Procedure
RQ1	Pre/Post test	16-28	Ordinal	Linear mixed-effects modeling
RQ1	Post test	54	Ordinal	Descriptive statistics (frequency)
RQ1	Interview	1-4	Qualitative	Inductive thematic analysis
RQ1/RQ2	Post test	57-58	Nominal	Descriptive statistics (frequency)
RQ1/RQ2	Pre/Post test	29-35	Ordinal	Linear mixed-effects modeling
RQ1/RQ2	Post test open ended	59	Qualitative	Inductive thematic analysis
RQ2	Pre/Post test	1-15	Ordinal	Linear mixed-effects modeling
RQ2	Pre/Post test	36-53	Ordinal	Linear mixed-effects modeling
RQ2	Post test	55-56	Ordinal	Descriptive statistics (frequency)
RQ2	Interview	5-8	Qualitative	Inductive thematic analysis
RQ3	Choir Director Survey	1-12	Qualitative	Inductive thematic analysis

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data from semi-structured student interviews, open-ended choir director survey responses, and researcher field notes were analyzed using an inductive thematic analysis approach. Transcripts were initially coded by the student researcher to identify patterns and recurring concepts within individual interviews. Codes were then compared across interviews to identify broader themes across participants. A dissertation committee member with expertise in research methods reviewed the coding structure, and coding decisions and theme development were refined collaboratively to strengthen consistency and credibility in the analysis.

Mixed-Methods Integration

Following separate quantitative and qualitative analyses, findings were integrated to support the mixed-methods design of the study. Quantitative survey results were considered alongside qualitative interview and open-ended survey data to examine how students' reported experiences with the interventions corresponded with measured patterns in anxiety, wellbeing, and emotion regulation. This process allowed the study to address both measurable outcomes and participant perspectives in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of intervention effectiveness.

Reliability and Validity

Pilot Testing and Instrument Revision

Prior to the dissertation study, the researcher-designed survey items were pilot tested to evaluate clarity and internal consistency. The pilot study included nine volunteer participants who completed the survey retrospectively as their middle school or high school selves. Adult participants were used to allow voluntary participation without the additional approval

procedures required for research involving minors during the summer course in which the instrument was developed.

Although the pilot sample was small ($n = 9$), the pilot allowed preliminary evaluation of item clarity, response patterns, and internal consistency. Feedback from the pilot testing process and instructor review informed revisions to the instrument prior to its use in the dissertation study.

Internal consistency of the pilot survey responses was examined using Cronbach's alpha. Initial analysis indicated that several items reduced internal consistency within their respective subscales. For the first item group, removal of the original item "I can name more than 5 emotions that I could potentially feel" improved reliability, resulting in a Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha = .67$ for the remaining items.

The second group of items demonstrated internal consistency of $\alpha = .73$ after separating one item ("I feel supported and understood by my choir director") for individual analysis. This item was retained because it measured a distinct construct related to perceived teacher support that was considered theoretically important for the study.

The final group of items demonstrated adequate internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha = $.77$, requiring no modifications.

Based on the pilot testing results and methodological feedback, several modifications were made prior to the dissertation study. The item "I can name more than 5 emotions that I could potentially feel" was removed due to limited variability in responses and its negative impact on internal consistency. Reverse-coded items were retained but scored appropriately during analysis. In addition, the Likert response format was revised from the original 7-point scale to a 4-point forced-choice scale to reduce midpoint bias and improve response

discrimination. Finally, the mental health demographic question was modified to allow respondents to select multiple options to capture co-occurring conditions such as anxiety and depression. Table 4 depicts the internal consistency of the pilot study analysis.

Table 4

Pilot Study Internal Consistency Analysis

Survey Questions	Cronbach's Alpha	Included in Final Survey	Adjustments	Rationale
1-6	.58	No	6 removed	Lowered consistency
1-5	.67	Yes	5 reverse scored	Only negative variable
7-13, 15-16	.73	Yes	14 separated 15 reverse scored	Not consistent with scale Only negative variable
14	N/A	Yes	Assessed individually	Measured different variable, still valuable data
17-22	.77	Yes	None	Internally consistent

Quantitative Reliability

Internal consistency reliability was examined for each scale using the full dissertation dataset. The standardized measures demonstrated strong internal consistency within the present sample: GAD-7 ($\alpha = .865$), SWEMWBS ($\alpha = .828$), and DERS-SF ($\alpha = .913$).

Reliability of the researcher-designed survey items was also evaluated. The items were grouped into three conceptual subscales: Emotion (items 1–5), Music and Emotion (items 6–15), and Mood (items 16–21). Internal consistency was examined using Cronbach's alpha, and item-total correlations were evaluated to identify items that reduced reliability.

For the Emotion subscale, item-level analysis indicated that Item 5 demonstrated a negative corrected item-total correlation ($-.026$) and substantially reduced internal consistency ($\alpha = .485$). Removal of this item increased Cronbach's alpha to $\alpha = .611$, and the item was therefore excluded from all subsequent analyses. The final Emotion subscale consisted of four

items, with corrected item-total correlations ranging from .230 to .503, indicating moderate internal consistency appropriate for exploratory research purposes.

For the Music and Emotion subscale, two reverse-coded items (Items 11 and 15) demonstrated poor item-total correlations ($-.147$ and $.161$) and reduced overall reliability ($\alpha = .638$). Because these items appeared inconsistent with the underlying construct and may have been misinterpreted by participants, they were removed from the subscale. Removal of these items improved internal consistency to $\alpha = .722$, yielding acceptable reliability for the remaining eight items, which were used to compute subscale scores for subsequent analyses.

For the Mood subscale, initial analysis indicated that one reverse-coded item reduced internal consistency. The item demonstrated a low corrected item-total correlation ($.132$) and lowered the overall alpha coefficient ($\alpha = .539$). After removal of this item, internal consistency improved to $\alpha = .680$, indicating acceptable reliability for the remaining five items in the subscale.

These decisions were made to optimize scale reliability while preserving the theoretical integrity of each subscale. The final subscale structures used in the analyses therefore consisted of four Emotion items, eight Music and Emotion items, and five Mood items.

Subscale scores were computed as the mean of the retained items for each participant and used in the subsequent quantitative analyses. Table 5 provides a visual overview of the reliability of the survey instruments.

Table 5*Survey Instruments Overview*

Instrument	Construct	Items	Scale	Reliability
GAD-7	Anxiety	7	4-point	$\alpha=.865$
SWEMWBS	Wellbeing	7	5-point	$\alpha=.828$
DERS-SF	Emotion regulation	18	5-point	$\alpha=.913$
EMO	Emotion	4	4-point	$\alpha=.611$
MAE	Music and Emotion	8	4-point	$\alpha=.722$
MOOD	Mood	5	4-point	$\alpha=.680$

Qualitative Credibility/Trustworthiness

Establishing rigor in a mixed-methods study requires attention to both quantitative reliability and validity as well as qualitative trustworthiness (Venkatesh et al., 2023). For the qualitative components of the study, trustworthiness was addressed through strategies supporting credibility, confirmability, and transparency in the analytic process.

Qualitative data from student interviews, choir director surveys, and researcher field notes were analyzed using an inductive thematic approach. Initial coding was conducted by the researcher to identify recurring patterns and emerging concepts within the data. A dissertation committee member with expertise in research methodology independently reviewed the coding structure and thematic interpretations. Differences in interpretation were discussed and resolved collaboratively in order to strengthen confirmability and consistency in the analysis.

Audio recordings of the interviews were reviewed during transcription and again during analysis to verify transcript accuracy and ensure that interpretations of participant responses were grounded in the original interview context. This process supported credibility by allowing the researcher to revisit participants' tone, emphasis, and conversational context when refining emerging themes.

Researcher field notes were used to document contextual observations during data collection and to support interpretation of emerging themes during analysis. Maintaining detailed documentation of coding decisions and analytic steps helped ensure transparency in the development of themes across the qualitative dataset.

In addition, the overall research design incorporated a demographically comparable control group to strengthen the internal validity of the quantitative component of the study.

Chapter 4

Results and Findings

A mixed-methodology approach of quantitative and qualitative analyses were conducted to examine adolescent experiences of anxiety, emotion, and music participation within the context of the music ensemble classroom-based music interventions implemented in this study. Quantitative survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and linear mixed-effects models (LMMs) to investigate changes in anxiety (GAD-7), wellbeing (SWEMWBS), emotion regulation (DERS-SF), emotion awareness (EMO), music–emotion engagement (MAE), and mood (MOOD) across the study period. These analyses also examined the potential influence of demographic characteristics including gender identity, school level, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, academic performance, and self-reported mental health status.

To complement the quantitative analyses, qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with a subset of participants ($n = 22$). Interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis in order to explore students' experiences with anxiety, emotional awareness, and the role of music in their emotional lives. This qualitative component provided additional insight into how students understood and applied the emotional regulation strategies introduced during the intervention.

Results are presented in three sections. The first section reports the quantitative findings, including descriptive statistics and results from the linear mixed-effects models. The second section presents the qualitative findings organized around themes identified through analysis of the interview transcripts. The final section integrates the quantitative and qualitative findings to provide a more comprehensive understanding of adolescents' emotional experiences with music participation and the perceived usefulness of the intervention strategies.

Quantitative Findings

Quantitative analyses examined whether psychology-informed interventions implemented in secondary choral classrooms were associated with changes in anxiety, wellbeing, emotion regulation, emotion awareness, music–emotion engagement, and mood over time. Linear mixed-effects models were used to evaluate group differences across repeated measurements while accounting for individual variability. Models were first estimated using baseline predictors, followed by secondary models that included demographic covariates to explore potential moderating influences. The dependent variables examined were anxiety (GAD-7), wellbeing (SWEMWBS), emotion regulation difficulties (DERS), emotion awareness (EMO), music–emotion engagement (MAE), and mood (MOOD).

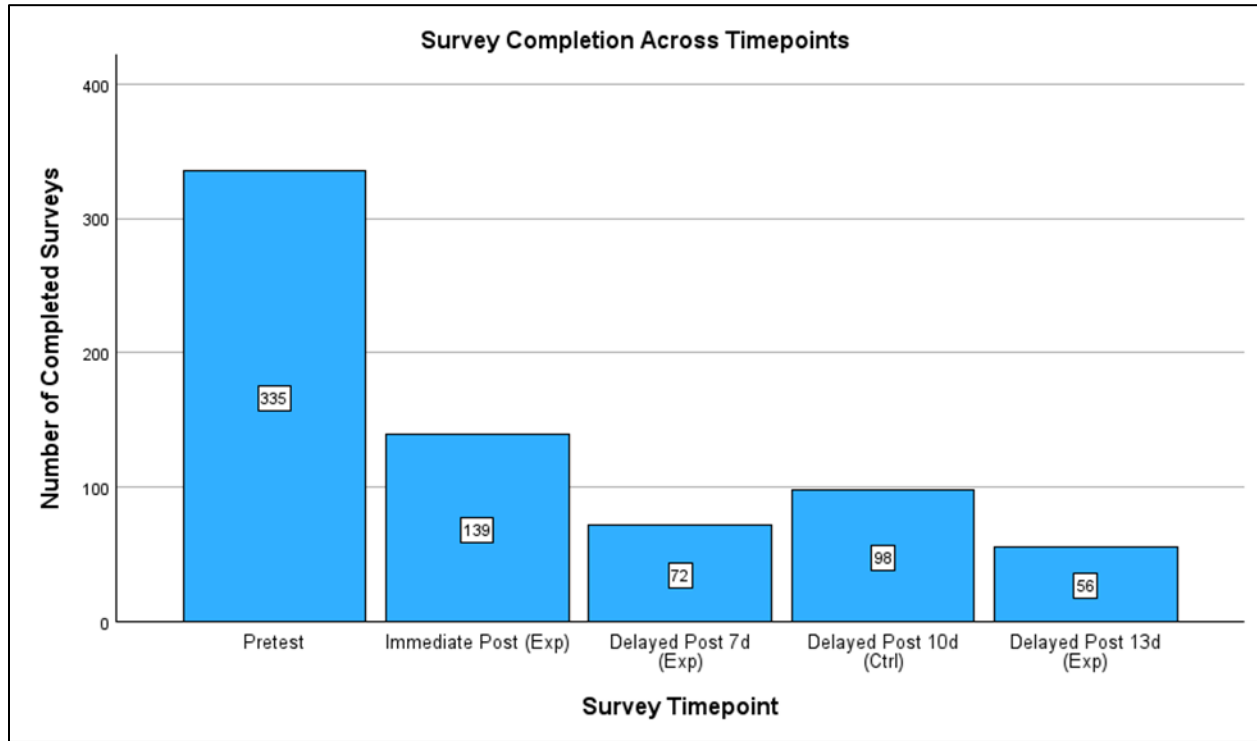
Participant Characteristics

A total of 700 survey responses representing $N = 363$ unique participants were included in the analyses. Participants completed surveys across up to five timepoints: pretest, immediate posttest, and delayed follow-ups at approximately 7, 10, and 13 days after the intervention (experimental group) or initial pretest (control group). Figure 1 displays survey completion across study timepoints.

Demographic information included gender identity, grade level, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, Grade Point Average (GPA), and self-reported mental health status.

Figure 1

Survey Completion Timepoints



Linear Mixed-Effects Models

Linear mixed-effects models were estimated using restricted maximum likelihood estimation. Participant ID was included as a random intercept to account for repeated observations within individuals. Days since intervention was modeled as a repeated measure using a first-order autoregressive covariance structure (AR1). Fixed effects included group, school level, time, and the interaction between group and time. Demographic covariates were added in secondary models.

Anxiety (GAD-7)

A linear mixed-effects model was conducted to examine whether anxiety scores changed over time as a function of intervention condition. The interaction between group and time was not statistically significant, $F(1, 204.90) = 0.79, p = .376$, indicating that changes in anxiety over

time did not differ between the experimental and control groups. There was also no significant main effect of group, $F(1, 368.79) = 0.82, p = .367$, suggesting that baseline anxiety levels did not differ between conditions.

School level was a significant predictor of anxiety scores, $F(1, 347.10) = 7.76, p = .006$, with middle school students reporting anxiety scores approximately 1.58 points lower than high school students. The main effect of time was not statistically significant, $F(1, 197.48) = 0.32, p = .570$.

When demographic covariates were included in the model, the interaction between group and time remained non-significant, $F(1, 237.65) = 3.23, p = .074$. Gender identity was a significant predictor of anxiety, $F(3, 387.92) = 4.05, p = .007$. Self-reported mental health status was strongly associated with anxiety scores, $F(1, 446.14) = 95.82, p < .001$, with students reporting mental health struggles scoring approximately 4.46 points higher on the GAD-7 scale.

Wellbeing (SWEMWBS)

A linear mixed-effects model examined changes in wellbeing over time. The interaction between group and time was not statistically significant, $F(1, 450.41) = 1.12, p = .291$, indicating that wellbeing scores did not change differently across groups. No significant main effects were observed for group, $F(1, 399.63) = 0.07, p = .792$, school level, $F(1, 363.39) = 0.88, p = .350$, or time, $F(1, 430.70) = 0.49, p = .483$.

When demographic variables were included, the interaction between group and time remained non-significant, $F(1, 478.85) = 3.30, p = .070$. Several demographic variables significantly predicted wellbeing scores, including gender identity, $F(3, 387.10) = 2.92, p = .034$, ethnicity, $F(5, 396.69) = 2.68, p = .021$, GPA, $F(4, 456.32) = 3.96, p = .004$, socioeconomic status, $F(5, 471.76) = 2.28, p = .046$, and mental health status, $F(1, 425.85) = 39.62, p < .001$.

Emotion Regulation Difficulties (DERS-SF)

A linear mixed-effects model examined whether emotion regulation difficulties changed over time. The interaction between group and time was not statistically significant in the baseline model, $F(1, 216.93) = 1.95, p = .164$. However, a significant main effect of time was observed, indicating that emotion regulation difficulties decreased slightly over time, $p = .006$.

When demographic covariates were included, the main effect of time was not statistically significant, $F(1, 218.60) = 0.13, p = .717$. However, a significant interaction between group and time emerged, $F(1, 229.91) = 7.64, p = .006$, indicating that DERS-SF scores changed differently over time for the experimental and control groups. Specifically, emotion regulation difficulties increased over time in the control group relative to the experimental group, suggesting that students in the intervention condition maintained more stable emotion regulation abilities across timepoints.

Mental health status was also a strong predictor of emotion regulation difficulties, $F(1, 475.48) = 92.07, p < .001$, with students reporting mental health struggles demonstrating substantially higher DERS scores.

Emotion Awareness (EMO)

A linear mixed-effects model was conducted to examine changes in emotion awareness across time. The interaction between group and time was not statistically significant, $F(1, 241.05) = 0.10, p = .754$, indicating that emotion awareness scores did not change differently between the experimental and control groups over time. There was also no significant main effect of group, $F(1, 388.43) = 0.001, p = .970$. However, school level significantly predicted emotion awareness scores, $F(1, 357.51) = 4.64, p = .032$, with middle school students reporting slightly higher emotion awareness than high school students.

When demographic covariates were included in the model, the interaction between group and time remained non-significant, $F(1, 253.62) = 0.145, p = .704$. Gender identity significantly predicted emotion awareness, $F(3, 380.24) = 5.79, p < .001$. Self-reported mental health status was also associated with lower emotion awareness scores. Taken together, these findings suggest that emotion awareness varied more as a function of participant characteristics than as a function of intervention condition.

Music and Emotion Engagement (MAE)

A linear mixed-effects model was conducted to examine music–emotion engagement across time. The interaction between group and time was not statistically significant, $F(1, 243.94) = 0.11, p = .738$, indicating that music–emotion engagement scores did not change differently between the experimental and control groups over time. A significant main effect of group was observed, $F(1, 374.98) = 27.49, p < .001$, with control group students reporting higher MAE scores overall. School level was also significant, $F(1, 352.50) = 12.47, p < .001$, with high school students reporting higher music–emotion engagement than middle school students. In addition, a small but statistically significant main effect of time was observed, $F(1, 232.67) = 9.68, p = .002$, indicating that MAE scores decreased slightly across timepoints.

When demographic covariates were included, the interaction between group and time remained non-significant, $F(1, 240.33) = 0.253, p = .615$. Grade level, $F(5, 318.75) = 5.22, p < .001$, and ethnicity, $F(5, 409.00) = 2.89, p = .014$, significantly predicted MAE scores. Because the group-by-time interaction was not significant in either model, the significant main effect of group should be interpreted as reflecting an overall difference between groups rather than evidence of differential intervention-related change over time.

Mood

A linear mixed-effects model was conducted to examine mood changes across time. In the baseline model, a significant interaction between group and time was observed, $F(1, 215.49) = 4.64, p = .032$, indicating that mood scores changed differently over time for the experimental and control groups. Specifically, mood scores declined over time in the control group relative to the experimental group.

However, when demographic covariates were included in the model, the interaction between group and time was no longer statistically significant, $F(1, 225.34) = 0.788, p = .376$. This suggests that the earlier group difference in mood trajectories was attenuated after accounting for participant characteristics. In the covariate-adjusted model, gender identity, $F(3, 380.86) = 4.74, p = .003$, GPA, $F(4, 472.67) = 2.51, p = .041$, and self-reported mental health status, $F(1, 444.99) = 88.00, p < .001$, significantly predicted mood scores. These results indicate that individual differences, particularly mental health status, were more strongly associated with mood outcomes than intervention condition after demographic factors were taken into account. Results from the Linear Mixed-effects Models (LMMs) are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6

Linear Mixed-Effects Model With Demographic Covariates Summary

Outcome	Group x Time	p	Key Covariates
Anxiety	ns	.074	Gender, mental health
Wellbeing	ns	.070	Gender, GPA
Emotion regulation	Significant	.006	Mental health
Emotion	ns	.704	Gender, mental health
Music and Emotion	ns	.615	Grade, ethnicity
Mood	Ns	.376	Gender, mental health

Student Perceptions of the Interventions

Participants in the experimental group were asked to report their perceptions of change following the intervention at both the immediate and delayed posttest. These items were analyzed descriptively using frequencies and percentages and are presented here as supplementary indicators of students' perceived usefulness and use of the intervention strategies.

At the immediate posttest, 39.6% of students reported that their anxiety was better than before the intervention, while 58.3% reported no change and 2.2% reported worse anxiety. At the delayed posttest, 38.3% of students continued to report improved anxiety. When both posttest scores were reported together, 39.0% of students reported that their anxiety was better than before the intervention, while 58.4% reported no change and 2.6% reported worse anxiety. Similar patterns were observed for positive emotions and emotion regulation, with approximately 39% to 41% of students reporting increased positive emotions and approximately 34% to 35% reporting improved ability to control emotions across both posttest time points.

When asked about the usefulness of the techniques taught in the intervention, 62.6% of students reported that the techniques were helpful at the immediate posttest, and 60.9% reported that they were helpful at the delayed posttest, with an average of 61.8% between both posttests. Self-reported use of the techniques also increased over time. At the immediate posttest, 39.6% of students reported using the techniques outside of class at least a few times, whereas at the delayed posttest this increased to 64.1%, with an average of 51.3% reporting having used the techniques. These descriptive findings suggest that many students perceived the interventions as useful and increasingly reported applying the strategies beyond the classroom, even when large short-term changes were not consistently observed across the quantitative outcome measures. Results from student perception are reported in Tables 7 and 8.

Table 7*Student Perception of Anxiety and Emotion*

Variable	Improved	No Change	Worse
Anxiety	39.0%	58.4%	2.6%
Positive emotions	40.1%	56.6%	3.4%
Ability to control emotions	34.5%	64.0%	1.5%

Table 8*Student Perception of Intervention Techniques*

Question	Yes/Yes many times	No	Unsure/Yes a few times
Found techniques helpful	61.8%	31.1%	7.1%
Used techniques since intervention	7.9%	48.7%	18.7%

Summary of Quantitative Findings

Across the six outcome variables examined, most models did not demonstrate statistically significant group-by-time interactions, suggesting that short-term changes in anxiety, wellbeing, emotion awareness, and music-emotion engagement were similar between the experimental and control groups. However, when demographic covariates were included, emotion regulation difficulties demonstrated a significant interaction between group and time, indicating that students in the intervention condition maintained more stable emotion regulation abilities compared to the control group. Mood outcomes also showed evidence of group differences over time in the baseline model, although these effects were attenuated when demographic variables were included.

Demographic variables emerged as consistent predictors across multiple outcomes, particularly self-reported mental health status, which was associated with higher anxiety, greater emotion regulation difficulties, and lower wellbeing. These findings suggest that while short-term classroom interventions may not produce immediate changes across all psychological

outcomes, they may contribute to stabilizing emotion regulation processes among students when individual differences are considered.

Qualitative Findings

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 22 participants to explore students' experiences with anxiety, emotion, and music participation. Descriptive comparisons between the interview subsample ($n = 21$ with baseline data) and the overall participant sample indicated broadly similar distributions across demographic characteristics and baseline measures (see Table 9). These comparisons suggest that the interview participants reflected patterns present in the larger study population. Thematic analysis developed through inductive coding identified five primary themes reflecting students' emotional experiences and perceptions of the interventions.

Table 9

Interview Participant Demographics Compared to Baseline

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Baseline Sample (n = 335)</i>	<i>Interview Subsample (n = 21)</i>
Gender Identity	Male	110	10
	Female	212	11
Grade Level	MS 6-8	195	8
	HS 9-12	140	13
Ethnicity	White (non-hispanic)	54	3
	White (hispanic)	53	3
	Asian/Pacific Islander	129	10
	Other/mixed race	54	5
SES	High income	59	5
	Middle to high income	89	3
	Middle income	100	6
	Low to middle income	29	2
	Unsure/do not want to answer	52	5
Self-identified mental health struggle	Yes	129	7
	No	206	14

Participant Interviews

Theme 1: Adolescents Experience Anxiety as Emotional and Physical Overwhelm.

Participants demonstrated a sophisticated awareness of anxiety relative to their age, describing both emotional and physical experiences, but often reported difficulty managing these emotions and a desire to fix them.

Middle school and high school participants described a variety of physical symptoms they feel when they experience stress or anxiety, with several expressing a lack of knowledge on what to do about those feelings. Hunter, a 9th grade male, described “usually my palms are, right now they're sweaty. And, kind of shaky. I think my voice gets a little higher.” Gavin, a 9th grade male, said “I knew, like, what it felt like...what it would do between your body, it would make you sweat...there's not a lot of, like, things I knew, like, how to fix it.” Maria, an 11th grade female who self-disclosed a history of depression, also referenced sweat, saying “it, like, locks up your whole body, and you can't, like, move or talk, you know, and you get all sweaty.” Scarlet, a 12th grade female with a self-disclosed history of depression and anxiety, described more significant physical symptoms, stating:

...for me, when I'm anxious, I get, like, really bad stomach aches. Like, in the fourth grade, I'd have to be...I was gone for almost half a school year, because my stomach would just hurt every day that I went to school...really bad stomach aches, my head hurts, I just get, like, really warm when I'm anxious.

Several middle school participants described their anxiety as more of an emotional experience rather than physical. Alan, a 7th grade male described anxiety as “just, like, random feelings going on, and thoughts going on in your mind,” while Aaliyah, a 6th grade girl with a self-disclosed history of anxiety, explained that “I get, like, really scared, and I start, like,

imagining scenarios in my head.” Penelope, a 7th grade female, described both physical and emotional experiences, saying “when I have anxiety, it's almost like... it's almost like my brain just never stops moving, and I'm like, my legs are just like this [bouncing her legs rapidly], and I'm constantly, like, worried of, like, what's gonna happen.”

Some of the high school participants described the mental and emotional side of their anxiety in a slightly more sophisticated understanding. Amar, a 10th grade male with a self-disclosed history of depression who also described his mental health as “I don't really know how to explain it, but I feel like the world around me crumbles day by day”, explained his experience with anxiety as:

well, I have experienced [anxiety] a few times on, like, previous tests...just because I didn't study is, like, stressful, because some of the information, if you don't study, then it'll be kind of, like, brand new to you, and you won't really know what to do for it.

This quote gives the context that Amar's experience of anxiety is tied to feeling unprepared.

Kailee, a 9th grade female with a self-disclosed history of depression, anxiety, and PTSD, focused on the fear and self-doubt involved in anxiety, saying “I think, like, maybe I'm not good enough or something, or I don't deserve everything I have...I just get stressed out about little things, and then big things, too.” Sabrina, a 12th grade female, described feeling overwhelmed when there are multiple emotions happening at once, stating:

there's just, like, a lot of emotions and stuff going through your head, especially when you're, like when you're doing, like, a lot of stuff in school, and, like, outside of your life, if there's just, like, a lot of, like, commitments that you have, and just, like, everything in your life is just, like, jumbled up, I feel like, it just gets hard to, like, manage all the things that are going through your mind.

Riya, a 9th grade female, did not feel like she had experienced a lot of anxiety, but understood that:

I think [on a] small level, of course [I have experienced anxiety], because I think any human has that... I've always been very, like, in tune with my emotions, so I'm able to, you know, understand what emotion I'm feeling, I understand how to fix that emotion that I'm feeling...so, that's kind of how I go about it.

Collectively, these responses suggest that adolescents possess a nuanced awareness of anxiety as both a physical and emotional experience. However, while many participants were able to describe their symptoms in detail, they often expressed uncertainty about how to manage these feelings, highlighting the importance of accessible emotion regulation strategies in school environments.

Theme 2: Adolescents Already Use Multiple Strategies to Manage Anxiety and Make Sense of Emotions. Participants reported active attempts to regulate anxiety and other overwhelming emotions using a wide range of strategies, focusing on music and breathing but mentioning other distraction techniques such as video games, reading, and spending time with loved ones. While some participants categorized emotions as being good or bad, several participants expressed a belief that all emotions are good because they are your body's way of communicating with you, and deal with regulating their emotions accordingly.

John, a 9th grade male participant, said he wouldn't classify emotions as good or bad, but maybe actions can be, further explaining that the interventions provided "helped me see, or explain a lot more of what I feel. Understanding what you're feeling, I think that's probably the most important for me, at least." Maria and Sarah, the female high school participant without baseline data, expressed similar thoughts on the role emotions play, with Maria saying "They're

just emotions. You feel them. You're supposed to feel them. They wouldn't exist if we weren't supposed to feel them” and Sarah explaining “I think...good emotions are healthy emotions, and that even includes emotions like anger and stress and sadness, because sometimes those are healthy emotions.”

When discussing the regulation and expression of emotions, participants had a lot to say. Scarlet made the point that “certain emotions definitely have better consequences than others do,” potentially indicating a desire to regulate the emotions with negative consequences. Riya expressed concern that the way some people express their emotions may not be as healthy as other ways, saying:

the way I express my anger is completely different with how [my friends] express their anger. They don't even show it sometimes. I'm like, you're angry? I could never tell.

They're just like, yeah, I just battle it internally, and I'm like. should you...I don't know if you...I don't know. Everyone has a different way of expressing it, everyone has a different way of handling it.

Ryan, a 6th grade male, had a more positive outlook on emotions after the interventions, saying “I used to think that it's not good to be have emotions. But then, after when you came, maybe it might be better to have emotions than I think. Because it, like, shows you how you feel.” Kailee said after the interventions, “I still feel like all the different kinds of emotions are, like, good, obviously, but some you can make yourself feel better. Like, the breathing exercises and stuff.” Sarai, a 7th grade female with a self-disclosed history of depression and anxiety, described herself as “pretty sensitive about emotions. I try to push them away...a lot of times. Usually, like, don't let myself feel them,” but explained that after the intervention visit “I don't... think they're a

waste of time. I don't think you should push them inside. Let yourself feel emotions fully, Good or bad.”

Many of the anxiety reduction and emotion regulation techniques participants described using involved distraction or avoidance of the feeling. John explained that “I really like playing video games and watching TV, sleep is a big one, too.” Sabrina also mentioned sleep and media use as a distraction and avoidance technique that also improves wellbeing, saying “sleeping has been something that I realized that, like, you need sleep to, like, function. I also like to watch, like, movies. I'm not someone that likes to hold onto a specific emotion too long, I think I get over things pretty fast, and so just, I think a movie or something to just, like, distract myself definitely helps.”

In addition to distraction techniques, a number of participants reported using music, breathing techniques, and discussions with friends or parents to relax, calm themselves down, and regulate. Aaliyah said “I definitely listen to music a lot. Just, like, doing anything to take my mind off of it, like, taking a break and doing something else. Or, like, talking to my friends a lot helps.” Brian, a 10th grade male with a self-disclosed history of depression and anxiety, explained that he not only uses music listening but also active participation, saying “sometimes while I put a earbud on, you know just to listen to some music for a little bit, helps a lot. Or sometimes, I know a little bit of piano, sometimes play piano.” Kailee does describe using distraction techniques like reading a book but also brings up music and the social aspect of making music in a choir, saying “I like listening to music. I feel like it can calm me down. I just feel like music can help with anxiety, especially whenever you're in a choir and you have your friends around you.” Amar described using active and passive music participation and talking to his parents and friends as some of his typical strategies for anxiety and emotion regulation, saying:

when I'm at home, doing homework, because I normally get a lot, I normally just listen to music, or just, like, sing, because it normally helps me cool off, calm down. Or whenever I'm taking a test or a quiz at school, I can't listen to music, so I just think of a song in my head, and think of the lyrics while I'm taking the exam, it helps me focus more and get better grades. If I'm deeply upset about something, either I go to my parents, because they're adults that I know really well, or my close friends, because people that are around your age group, they know more about you.

Sabrina uses music listening and breathing techniques like the one from the intervention, saying: music definitely does help me. I'll just sit in my room and put my AirPods in and just listen to a song. The breathing technique thing, I actually use what we did, I've been doing it recently where you just take a second to just sit and breathe and collect your thoughts, I think that definitely does help a lot.

Riya describes using similar techniques to both Sabrina and Amar with the addition of mentioning the use of stress toys, saying:

music is definitely something I use. Breathing techniques, the exercise you showed last week, I actually do use that on...usually on auditions and things like that, so I was able to understand why you showed that, because it does help, and I do use that. I like to talk to people, I think it really helps. My parents are always open, they're always making time for me, so that's kind of who I usually talk to the most.

Several participants in addition to Riya brought up performance and audition anxiety when describing their use of anxiety coping and emotion regulation techniques. Gavin described using positive reframing when performing, saying:

I think that even if you have anxiety when going on stage, usually when you start singing, over time, you realize who you're in front of. You're in front of people who are here for a reason, because they enjoy listening to you.

Sabrina described the fear that goes along with the all-state choir audition process, which in Texas involves thousands of people over multiple rounds of auditions, and explained that multiple exposures improved her anxiety, saying:

I did the All-state process, and I remember very, very early on, in freshman year, I was very scared, and I would, like, be very nervous. I'd be shaking in an audition room or something, but I think the more that I did it, I've overcome that. This past recent audition that I had, I went in, I was completely okay. I think getting used to doing things multiple times, that helps a lot.

These responses indicate that adolescents actively attempt to regulate anxiety and other difficult emotions using a variety of strategies, including music listening, social support, breathing techniques, and distraction. While many participants already possessed informal coping strategies, the interventions appeared to provide structure and language for understanding and intentionally applying these techniques.

Theme 3: Adolescents Experience Significant Stress but Often Feel Adults Do Not Understand. Participants reported intense stress from school pressure, social expectations, social media, and the exponential effect of all factors combined, and reported feeling like adults may underestimate these experiences.

Several participants described school and the pressures of homework and classes as playing a big role in their anxiety, and feeling that their parents in particular do not understand how much school has changed in recent years. Gavin said:

I think a lot of students get anxiety and stressed out, they have a lot of schoolwork to do, and parents don't really think about that, and they're asking their children to do a lot of things and expecting them to do their best, but they could be stressed from a lot of schoolwork that they don't really know about, because school's changed since then.

Brian described the layers of school stress and how it affects an adolescent's mood, saying "there's stress with assignments, and all added up into one, like multiple test quizzes, and I'll have to study all for that to make sure you can complete, so we'll just be down." Amar described frustration when parents do not understand school pressure, feeling like:

sometimes when I'm trying to study, my parents always barge in. I feel like they should at least give me some leniency, let me focus on studying or doing my work. I feel like parents should also understand that their students are trying their best. Instead of trying to discipline their children, I feel like the parents should help them out, help them grow.

In addition to school stress, participants described how cultural and generational differences impact how the adults in their lives perceive their anxiety and stress. Riya explained feeling the need to suppress emotions at school, saying:

when you're around so many authority figures, so many adults, at school the norm is to, whatever emotion you're feeling, kind of hold it until home. Always keep a smile on your face, always be positive, but I think adults should know that we're still teenagers, our minds are still developing, our bodies are still developing, we're going through a lot, and then on top of that, we have seven classes, homework, especially at competitive schools such as this one. I think it's important to know that outbursts will happen, when you suppress yourself so much on an 8-hour day at school, it's kind of inevitable, and I don't think you should fault the child for it. I think you should see what's underlying, what is

the issue. I think it happens a lot with how the parents grew up versus how the children grew up. My parents came from India, so I'm in America now, I have an entirely different environment, different culture, different societal understanding of mental health, so I think the way we battle that is going to be extremely different. It's not going to be the same as your experience when you grow up, because I know some places, they kind of hide that, just tough it out? But, I think Gen Z especially is one of the most vocal generations with anxiety and any sort of mental health, so I believe that I want [adults] to know that the way you went through mental health is going to be way different than how another generation will go through mental health, and you can kind of see that in real life.

Maria explained that “I think they think less of it because we're kids, they think we have less on our plate, but it's the same as theirs,” further describing that it may be more intense because “teenagers may experience emotions a little bit more loudly or bigger than adults.” Aaliyah’s experience was similar, saying:

I just want some adults to be more understanding and give kids a minute, because sometimes they experience really bad anxiety, or they have the same feelings that the same adults could feel, and they don't really realize that a kid could feel that, too.

Ariana, a 9th grade female, described the differences by saying that “I feel like emotion [is] going more heavy like how it used to be, so I feel like [adults] should help kids more when they're feeling emotions so they can feel safe, feel like they're understood about their emotion.” Sabrina explained the volatility of emotions as a teenager and frequently feeling unheard and misunderstood, saying:

especially as a teen, your emotions are like a rollercoaster, nothing is the same, so adapting to...sometimes we're gonna have bad days, sometimes we're gonna have good

days, I think sometimes I feel like people don't listen, and so I think just taking a minute to just really understand what someone is going through, I think that definitely will help a lot.

Several participants reported feeling pressure from the adults in their lives to either hide their emotions and anxiety or address them in a specific way that they did not find helpful or effective. Brock, a 6th grade male, describes a fear of disclosing anxiety to parents, saying some kids do have anxiety and they don't show it, because they don't want to be embarrassed or anything. It's not because they're being in a bad way, they're trying to tell that something bad is happening, but they don't really want to tell their parents about it.

Sarai explained:

some adults don't take it seriously and just say stop being a baby and just get over it. They need to understand that it's not something you can just forget about, you need to help them overcome. You can't just ignore teenage hormones, they just say it's a distraction and they're overreacting.

Sabrina described feeling like each individual needs different methods to deal with their anxiety, explaining that adults in her life say things like:

“this is what you need to do,” but I think it's more giving each person their own space and time to heal on their own, and rather than thinking, “oh, this is a set way to solve it,” because everybody is different and you might be going through different things, and so I think it really just depends on, the individual, just to provide a space to listen to what they need and want.

Kailee describes how adult approaches to anxiety lead to her feeling alone in handling her stress, saying “the ways they try to deal with kid’s anxieties, it doesn't really help, and it kind of stresses us out more, and so I feel like we kind of have to deal with some things on our own.”

A few participants described how all of the factors combined had a stronger effect than any individual stressors, and adults in their lives did not seem to acknowledge that. Sarah expressed that “not bringing a ton of pressure helps so much with everything, because when several different parts of my life are all putting pressure, it really adds up fast.” Scarlet added insightful reflections on the role of social media in anxiety, saying:

with the introduction of technology there...it's multiple layers than it was even just 10 years ago. There's so many layers to it, if it's in a performance and your voice cracks or something, someone might be recording that, and it'd be able to be posted everywhere. That's something that's able to be done now that you couldn't do [when] my mom was a kid.

Across interviews, participants described experiencing multiple overlapping sources of stress, including academic pressure, social expectations, family dynamics, and the influence of technology and social media. Many students also expressed the perception that adults underestimate these stressors, suggesting that adolescents may benefit from school environments where their emotional experiences are acknowledged and validated.

Theme 4: Adolescents Found the Interventions Helpful and Transferable.

Participants viewed the interventions as useful tools for managing stress, even when they had not widely used them yet, sharing plans to use them in stressful situations such as tests, extracurricular activities, and musical performances. Participants were split on which anxiety intervention they perceived as most helpful, implying that both box breathing and the magnify

technique, described by many participants as “good scenario bad scenario”, may be useful in different contexts and for different participant personalities.

The finding of participants describing the techniques as useful but not having significant stress since the introduction of the interventions helps explain why large quantitative changes have not yet been observed. Many participants have not yet found themselves in situations with significant enough levels of stress to feel the need to utilize the interventions, therefore their effects cannot yet be quantified.

When describing how they used box breathing and how they thought it would be useful for students in other choirs, participants listed both activities involving choir and school, and experiences that may occur outside of a school setting. Aaliyah described her experience using box breathing, saying she used it “when I got really nervous for this upcoming test that I had, and it worked, because I didn't do too bad on the test, I got a mark that I wanted, and I calmed down before the test happened.” She believed the usefulness of these techniques would extend to other choir students, saying:

I know a lot of other kids my age struggle with anxiety and stuff, and they don't really know how to feel their emotions, and they don't know how to control them, and this could help them find a way to control their emotions.

Amar had used box breathing before in 7th grade and began using it again after the interventions, saying “it's helping me improve, not just in school but at work, out of school.” Kailee explained why she believes box breathing would be helpful to other choir students, saying “especially in high school, it's really stressful, and whenever you do a lot of after-school things, which does include choir, it can be stressful.” Riya described liking box breathing “because I feel like when I'm tuning in on my breath, I kind of tune everything else out of my head. It just calms

everything down,” and Maria thought it could be helpful in a panic attack type situation “if you're freaking out, like, super freaking out, it could help.” Sabrina explained how she thinks box breathing would be helpful to students who are especially involved in choir events that can get overwhelming alongside school obligations, saying “just taking a moment where you're like, it's gonna be okay, just take a breather, I think if it's consistent, I think that it definitely would help.” Scarlet mentioned that she has used box breathing previously but forgot it existed and is easy to incorporate into the school day, and said:

I personally think the breathing one's really helpful, especially because I have so many physical reactions to getting anxious, so it helps me, not get as warm, or be able to just chill down and slow my heart rate and that kind of stuff.

Scarlet added that she used it that day on a difficult pre-cal quiz, and thinks it would help others:

because I feel like a lot of people, maybe they're not able to get access to these kinds of, mental health resources outside of school, and so to be able to have even just a couple of ways to manage anxiety, not just for choir, but for other kinds of aspects of their life, would definitely help.

Similar to their descriptions of box breathing, participants mentioned using or potentially planning to use magnify, referred to colloquially as best case worst case or good scenario bad scenario, in a variety of contexts. Gavin, who is in both choir and band, said “I think the scenario one is more helpful than the breathing for me because I breathe a lot, so it's already something I'm used to, but the scenario is something new for me to try.” Brian had not yet tried out box breathing so he also thought magnify was more helpful, saying “you can see your bad scenario, good scenario, you probably strengthen the possibility of the good scenario compared to the bad scenario.” Aaliyah explained that she would previously:

imagine the worst possible thing that could happen. So I really like the scenario where you could see the best thing and the worst thing, because it helped me see what could actually happen instead of making up all the big things that never really could happen. Every time I do something, it's most probably not gonna go that bad like what I imagine it will, so it helped me, like, actually see reality instead of making all those fake scenarios in my head.

Riya and Penelope both described using magnify for test anxiety, with Riya saying “today we had an AP Human test, and I was like, oh my god, I'm gonna fail, but no, let's think realistically, I'm probably gonna pass,” and Penelope saying “it brought me back to reality, because I know that I won't get a zero on this test. I'll probably get at least a 70, you know?” Penelope also used magnify to help her return to reality for volleyball, “because I'm always scared that I'll never get to playing time, and I know that's unrealistic since I'm starting.”

Several participant comments described how both box breathing and magnify could be helpful to other choir students, and why they feel like these techniques are useful. Scarlet mentioned that the intervention activity itself was helpful because it put names to things she already did, saying “that way if someone's like, ‘oh I need help with this,’ I can actually tell them what to do instead of just showing it.” Riya also talked about the difficulties related to beginner choir participation, saying:

5th grade and 6th grade was when I saw a lot of kids get really nervous about singing in public with a beat. Even with those big choirs, you can see them get nervous, their hands get sweaty, they're like, “can you please hug me, can I please talk to you?” So I think that this is really important, even for younger kids because it's a real issue.

Alan described magnify and box breathing as being helpful in different ways, saying magnify “helped me move back to reality, rather than just going on... off into my own world.”

Collectively, these responses suggest that students viewed the interventions not as isolated classroom activities but as practical strategies that could be applied in a variety of real-world situations, including academic tests, performances, and everyday stressors.

Theme 5: Music Facilitates Emotional Understanding and Expression. Music participation helped students reflect on, understand, and express their emotions, although the ease of making emotional connections to choir music and personally preferred music varied between individuals.

A few participants described the role of listening to and participating in music as a tool to improve their anxiety. Ariana emphasized a feeling of safety, saying “I feel like music does really help with anxiety. You know, you just feel safe,” while John admitted that “I don’t listen to a lot of choir music, but I think music really helps me with my anxiety, I think it helps a lot of people.” Penelope talked about using music as a coping skill, saying:

whenever I'm stressed and like my brain can't stop moving, I think that the music is really helpful because it helps me calm down, you know? I can just sing and forget all about my troubles, let all my troubles drift away.

Some participants described how incorporating emotion and a connection of their own emotions to the music they were singing improved the musicality of their performance. Sarai said connecting her emotions to the music “did help me sound more emotional in the song, instead of being all flat,” and Chelsea, a 7th grade female, felt like the connection put her in the present moment “so you don't sound, like, bland, you can [express] emotion through your words.” Sarah felt like she put more personality and emotion into the music when she was

reminded how it connects to her emotions, saying “I was connecting more energetic and happy music with more happier emotions and experiences,” and Ariana said it “helped me see music really does show more emotion when we really see what the music is about.” Scarlet discussed upcoming college music auditions, explaining that “I try to find pieces that are easier for me to relate to at least a bit emotionally, so that way it's able to be performed a bit better,” and explaining specific musical elements that carry more meaning when she understands the emotion, saying “it can help me kind of follow the crescendos better, because the emotion's growing higher.” Sabrina is an actor and participates in the school musicals along with choir, and described how “you have to try to relate yourself and put yourself in that position. I think that's, like, important to really feeling the music and getting a better, deeper meaning out of it.” She found the act of connecting easy due to her acting background, and described an experience where:

I was singing a song, and when I was just singing it normally, it was good, but it wasn't amazing, but I smiled and it just kind of made the song better, like, I sounded better when you were naturally feeling an emotion.

In one of the most profound subthemes, participants described how making an emotional connection to the music made them feel less alone and helped them understand and express feelings, sometimes feelings they were unsure how to express in any other way. Riya stated that “my life has been music,” finding it easier to relate to flowy choir music that tends to have “more touching lyrics than just pop or regular music,” even when she has to go home and translate the music from another language into English to understand it. She went on to describe how many people her age struggle to know what they are feeling or how to fix the feelings or remain calm, saying “I think it's important that everyone can pinpoint what emotions they're feeling,” going on

to describe how you can use music and breathing exercises as a tool to help with this issue, saying you can work through it if “you get touched by one of the pieces, the lyrics that they entail, and try to kind of see yourself in that, and see what am I feeling, how can I fix this in the future?” Scarlet did not necessarily connect to only choir music, saying she found it helpful that “with how much media is readily available now, you're able to find more [music] you can emotionally connect to.” Kailee found it “really cool [connecting emotion to music] because some of the music’s really sad, and it makes you feel certain things. Connecting to songs sometimes, it can make you feel better.” Amar had a lot to say about music and emotions, because:

there's multiple ways that music can explain your emotions. Once I was able to relate how the song relates to myself, I can understand what’s going on through the song. You can express yourself through music, each song can be a different part of you.

Aaliyah felt less alone in how she experienced emotions because of music, saying:

knowing that you're not the only one that feels certain ways, because certain songs can express how you're feeling, because normally I don't talk about my emotions on a daily basis, and songs is one way that a lot of people express their emotions.

Gavin found it helpful to connect songs to his emotions to say things you may not be able to say other ways “because it helps you connect your emotions without actually having to say them out loud, because it's a song. You're not truly telling them what you're feeling, but at the same time, you are.” Maria’s description of emotional connection to songs was short, but profound: “It can help express emotions that you didn’t know you needed to express.”

These responses suggest that music participation provides adolescents with a structured and emotionally meaningful context in which to explore, understand, and express complex

feelings. For many participants, choir functioned not only as a musical activity but also as a psychologically safe space where emotions could be experienced and expressed through music when they were difficult to externalize or articulate in everyday interactions. Table 10 provides descriptions of the five main qualitative themes found through the inductive analysis.

Table 10

Qualitative Themes

Theme	Description
Anxiety as overwhelm	Physical + emotional symptoms
Existing coping strategies	Music, distraction, breathing
Stress not understood	School pressure + adults
Interventions transferable	Used for tests, auditions
Music as emotional outlet	Processing emotions

Supplemental Qualitative Findings

In addition to the participant interviews, two additional qualitative data sources were used to provide supplementary perspectives on the intervention: open-ended responses from student posttest surveys and an open-ended survey completed by choir directors. These sources provided additional context for understanding how the intervention strategies were perceived and applied within and beyond the classroom setting. The 4 choir directors (2 at the middle school and 2 at the high school) were also invited to complete an open-ended survey regarding their perception of the interventions.

Student Reflections on Intervention Use. There were 267 participant responses on the open-ended questions which were analyzed through inductive coding revealed similar ideas to those found in the qualitative interviews, primarily Theme 4 regarding the usefulness of these interventions. While many participants reported that they had not yet used the interventions, a large number of participants reported using both box breathing and the magnify technique in a variety of contexts including academic tests, homework stress, before performances, before

sporting events or practices, and during family conflict. The main benefit reported from box breathing was improved relaxation and focus with a reduction in anxiety, while the main benefit reported from magnify was increased internal regulation, more confident decision making, and grounding in reality. One participant reported “I had a dance performance a few days ago and I felt nervous and used the technique throughout the performance and got through with a few mistakes and a big smile on my face,” while another said “now I know what to do when I am stressed. Whenever I felt like I was the only one singing, I used to feel scared. But now, I am getting more comfortable with solos.” A few participants mentioned not feeling like learning the techniques were helpful, either due to resistance to breathing techniques, feelings of lightheadedness when attempting them, or prior experience with the techniques so the information was redundant. One participant who had previously used similar techniques said “I practice different breathing techniques without this study, but this helped me realize that what I am doing is important and that I really do appreciate choir.”

Choir Director Perspectives. I sent the open-ended survey to four choir directors and three returned it (two middle school and one high school). These participants provided an external adult perspective which was analyzed through inductive coding and revealed overall positive impressions of the interventions but expressed a desire for them to be presented in a manner that is less clinical and sterile, with more open discussion and less time constraints. One High School director felt it was too early to give meaningful feedback, alluding to the study having more potential as a longitudinal study with multiple data points across a school year. The technique mentioned most by directors was box breathing, with two directors saying they have used it with their groups since the intervention for regulation during warm-ups and prior to performances. Directors did not report observing clear external changes in anxiety or emotion

regulation among students during the short follow-up period, but one did mention that their students are generally well-regulated and do not show external signs anxiety typically. Directors were mixed on changes in performance anxiety, with one middle school director reporting no change while the other reported students seeming more focused on polishing songs, while the high school director said only their most experienced group has performed and one student did report the least nervousness they had experienced in a performance but attributed it to prior performance experience with that repertoire. While the high school director reported no difference in emotional connection or musicality, both middle school directors reported a slight increase in musicality and expression on the piece used in the intervention, with one middle school class appreciating the specific emotional ideas we discussed in their song and expressing a desire to perform it with those ideas.

Together, these supplemental qualitative data sources reinforced patterns observed in the interviews, particularly the perceived usefulness of the breathing and cognitive reframing techniques and their application to academic, performance, and everyday stressors.

Mixed-Methods Integration

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings provides a more comprehensive understanding of adolescents' emotional experiences within the choral classroom context. While the quantitative analyses did not demonstrate large short-term intervention effects for anxiety or overall wellbeing, the qualitative interviews revealed that many students already possessed coping strategies for managing stress and emotions, including listening to music, seeking social support, and using distraction techniques. These findings help contextualize the limited changes observed in some quantitative outcomes, suggesting that the interventions may have reinforced or structured strategies that students were already using rather than introducing entirely new

coping behaviors. Table 11 presents a joint display summarizing the integration of quantitative and qualitative findings across the three research questions.

Table 11

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Research Question	Quantitative Findings	Qualitative Findings	Integrated Interpretation
RQ1: To what extent were breathing and cognitive reframing strategies associated with changes in anxiety and wellbeing?	No significant group \times time interaction for anxiety (GAD-7) or wellbeing (SWEMWBS). Descriptive results indicated ~39% of students reported improved anxiety and ~60% reported techniques were helpful.	Theme 4: Students perceived breathing and magnify techniques as useful and transferable. Theme 2: Students already used multiple coping strategies.	Although large short-term statistical changes were not observed, students reported actively applying the techniques in academic, musical, and everyday stress situations, suggesting the interventions reinforced existing coping strategies rather than introducing entirely new behaviors.
RQ2: To what extent was the music-based emotion regulation intervention associated with changes in emotion regulation, emotion awareness, music–emotion engagement, and mood?	Significant group \times time interaction for DERS-SF when demographic covariates were included, indicating more stable emotion regulation in the intervention group. Other outcomes were not statistically significant.	Theme 5: Music facilitated emotional understanding and expression. Theme 1: Adolescents experience anxiety as emotional and physical overwhelm.	The emotion-focused intervention may support stabilization of emotion regulation processes, with qualitative responses suggesting that connecting emotions to music helped students reflect on and process emotional experiences.
RQ3: How did students and choir directors describe the usefulness and transferability of the interventions?	Descriptive statistics showed increasing use of techniques outside class (39.6% \rightarrow 64.1%). Majority reported interventions were helpful.	Theme 4: Interventions helpful and transferable. Choir director responses noted use of breathing techniques during warm-ups and performances.	Both student and teacher perspectives suggest the strategies were practical and easy to integrate into rehearsal routines, even if short-term psychological changes were limited.

The strongest quantitative evidence of an intervention-related effect emerged for emotion regulation difficulties (DERS-SF), where the group-by-time interaction indicated that students in the intervention group maintained more stable emotion regulation trajectories compared to students in the control group. This finding aligns with qualitative interview responses in which participants described actively using the breathing and cognitive reframing strategies introduced during the intervention to manage stressful situations such as tests, performances, and extracurricular activities. Students frequently described these techniques as helping them “come back to reality,” calm their bodies, or organize their thoughts when experiencing anxiety.

Additional support for the perceived usefulness of the interventions emerged from the descriptive posttest perception items, where a majority of students reported that the techniques were helpful and an increasing proportion reported using them outside of class over time. These findings correspond with qualitative themes describing the interventions as practical tools that could be applied in multiple contexts beyond choir rehearsal.

Finally, qualitative findings emphasized the role of music itself as a medium for emotional reflection and expression. Many participants described choir as a space where emotions could be safely explored and communicated through music when they were difficult to express verbally. While these experiences may not have immediately produced measurable changes in standardized psychological scales, they provide important context for understanding how music participation may support adolescents’ emotional development and emotion regulation processes over time.

Taken together, the mixed-methods findings suggest that psychology-informed strategies integrated into choral rehearsal may not immediately reduce measurable anxiety or wellbeing

scores but may support adolescents' ongoing emotion regulation processes and provide tools that students can apply in real-world stress situations.

Chapter 5

Discussion

This study investigated the potential for psychology-informed strategies integrated into choral music instruction to support anxiety reduction, emotion regulation, and student wellbeing among secondary choral students. Using a mixed-methods design, quantitative survey data and qualitative interview data were collected to examine both measurable psychological outcomes and students' lived experiences with the interventions. While large short-term changes were not consistently observed across all quantitative measures, the findings revealed meaningful patterns in emotion regulation stability, student perceptions of the interventions, and the ways adolescents use music and coping strategies to navigate emotional experiences.

The strongest quantitative evidence of intervention-related change emerged in the area of emotion regulation, where students in the intervention group demonstrated more stable trajectories of emotion regulation difficulties across time compared to students in the control group. Within the qualitative interviews and supplementary qualitative data, students perceived the interventions as helpful, and reported that music served as a safe space for not only emotional understanding, but also as a means of expressing emotions that were previously unable to be externalized.

Interpretation of Quantitative Findings

The quantitative findings of this study provide insight into how short-term classroom-based interventions may influence adolescents' emotional experiences.

Although the intervention did not produce statistically significant reductions in anxiety scores across the study period, this finding should be interpreted in the context of the short timeframe of the intervention and the complexity of adolescent anxiety. Anxiety symptoms often

develop over extended periods and may require sustained intervention to produce measurable change.

Similarly, overall wellbeing did not demonstrate significant short-term changes associated with the intervention. Measures of wellbeing may reflect broader life circumstances and longer-term emotional states that are less sensitive to brief classroom interventions.

In contrast to the anxiety and wellbeing measures, emotion regulation demonstrated a meaningful intervention-related pattern. The significant group-by-time interaction for the DERS-SF indicated that students in the intervention condition maintained more stable emotion regulation trajectories across the study period compared to students in the control group, which is in line with prior research by Hayrynen (2022) regarding the potential universal usefulness of strategies that combine CBT and DBT techniques.

This finding suggests that the psychology-informed strategies introduced in the intervention may have supported students' ability to manage emotional experiences even if immediate reductions in anxiety symptoms were not observed.

Differences in emotion awareness and music–emotion engagement across school levels suggest that developmental factors may influence how adolescents connect emotional experiences with music.

Interpretation of Qualitative Findings

The qualitative findings provide important context for understanding adolescents' emotional experiences and the ways they interact with music and coping strategies in their daily lives. Participants demonstrated a strong awareness of anxiety as both a physical and emotional experience, yet many expressed uncertainty about how to manage these feelings effectively, with

many using the word “fix” to describe emotion management as if having feelings makes them broken.

Many participants described using a variety of coping strategies prior to the intervention, including music listening, distraction, social support, and breathing techniques. This finding suggests that adolescents are not passive recipients of emotional experiences but are actively attempting to regulate their emotions using available tools. However, many students described using primarily distraction-based strategies, which may temporarily reduce distress but do not necessarily support deeper emotional processing or long-term regulation.

Students frequently described experiencing multiple overlapping stressors, including academic expectations, social pressures, and family dynamics, while also expressing the perception that adults often underestimate the intensity of these experiences. If adolescents are feeling that their anxiety and emotions are not being taken seriously, that increases the likelihood that the adults in their lives are not providing support or productive strategies to manage overall wellbeing and mental health, leaving students feeling stranded to deal with overwhelming emotions alone.

Students consistently described the intervention strategies as practical tools that could be applied in a variety of real-world situations, including academic testing, musical performances, and everyday stress. There was a sense of hopefulness from many participants that now that they have a few small tools to deal with their anxiety and emotions, maybe they will not be quite as overwhelming and they may actually feel manageable most of the time.

Music participation emerged as a powerful medium through which adolescents could explore and express emotions that were difficult to communicate verbally. This finding, in line with prior research on music and emotion by Chin and Rickard (2014) and Cook et al. (2019)

provides data for something music educators and musicians alike have known intuitively for centuries: music is a form of communication that transcends words and notes and transforms into a language that can convey feelings and experiences beyond the boundaries of spoken language.

Mixed-Methods Interpretation

When considered together, the quantitative and qualitative findings suggest that the interventions may support adolescents' emotion regulation processes even when immediate reductions in anxiety or improvements in wellbeing are not observed in standardized psychological measures.

While some students already had coping strategies including some of those introduced in this study, for many participants they were brand new and provided a means of self-regulation previously unavailable to them, which is in line with the WHO (2025b) findings regarding insufficient access to mental health resources for adolescents. For those who were already aware of the strategies, this intervention provided a reminder of their use, a structure for when and how they could be applied, and a name so they could pass this information on to their peers or families who may need self-regulation tools. While quantitative measures of anxiety and wellbeing did not show large short-term changes, qualitative responses indicated that students actively applied the strategies introduced during the intervention and perceived them as helpful tools for managing stress. The descriptive posttest perception data further support this interpretation, as a majority of students reported that the intervention strategies were helpful and an increasing proportion reported using the techniques outside of class over time.

Music provided students with a space to process their own emotions, both those they are familiar with, can name, and have experience dealing with, and those that they have traditionally put aside or chosen not to deal with because they are complex, overwhelming, and scary. For

students dealing with trauma or difficult home situations, the music and emotion connection technique could provide an avenue for students to express emotions that are not safe to express in other contexts.

Implications for Music Education Practice

This study contributes to a growing body of research exploring the role of music education in supporting student wellbeing. By demonstrating the potential for psychology-informed strategies to be integrated into choral instruction, this research highlights how music educators can play an important role in supporting students' emotional development.

The findings of this study suggest that psychology-informed strategies can be incorporated into existing choral rehearsal structures with minimal disruption to instructional time. In most of the classrooms, the implementation of all three interventions took between 10-15 minutes of class time total. Techniques such as structured breathing exercises, cognitive reframing of performance anxiety, and guided emotional engagement with song lyrics align naturally with traditional vocal warm-ups and interpretive rehearsal practices. As a result, these strategies may be implemented without requiring major curricular restructuring while still supporting students' emotional development.

By providing evidence that simple, psychology-informed strategies can be incorporated into music instruction, music educators today and in the future can help nurture musicians who are not only artistically skilled but also emotionally resilient, self-aware, and capable of navigating the challenges of modern life.

Boundaries Between Music Educators and Mental Health Professionals

It is important to emphasize that the role of the music educator is not to diagnose or treat mental health conditions. Music educators are not mental health professionals, and the strategies

explored in this study are not intended to replace professional mental health care when it is needed. These strategies represent universal classroom supports rather than clinical interventions, in line with prior research by Edgar et al. (2023) regarding Universal Design in Learning in music classroom contexts. They are designed to promote emotional awareness and healthy coping skills for all students rather than to diagnose or treat specific mental health conditions. These classroom-based approaches may support students' emotional awareness and coping skills within the natural context of music instruction. Techniques such as breathing exercises, cognitive reframing, and emotional engagement with music can be implemented in ways that benefit all students regardless of whether they are experiencing clinical mental health challenges.

Limitations

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings of this study. The short intervention duration could impact the effectiveness of the intervention, and uneven follow-up timing may impact the overall quality of the collected data. Because the intervention was implemented within a relatively short time frame, the study was not able to capture longer-term effects that may emerge as students continue using the strategies over time. As with all self-report surveys, there is a chance of inadequate self-reflection or even intentional deception. With this study specifically looking at choral music, it cannot yet be generalized to instrumental musicians or other contexts. The researcher designed scales showed only moderate reliability, indicating a need for further refinement and reliability testing before repeat studies. The response rate from choir directors was only 75%, which means data from adults observing the interventions is incomplete. Because the intervention implementation was not strictly scripted, there may have been small inconsistencies between classes, and songs chosen for the emotion

regulation exercise addressed different emotions with different intensity levels, which may have impacted specific classes differently than others.

Future Research

Future research will continue to explore the intersection of music education and student wellbeing. In the next administration of this study, consideration will be given to introducing a longer intervention period with possible longitudinal studies over the course of a school year. The researcher designed subscales will be refined and pilot tested to improve reliability and ensure that they are accurately measuring the included variables. Future research will also expand on this work through externally funded research initiatives designed to examine longer-term intervention implementation and broader applications of psychology-informed strategies in music education settings. Following these adjustments, consideration will be given to adjusting the study to include instrumental music ensembles, as well as standardizing an approach to teacher training that incorporates the data from these studies. Future research should also explore the development of structured training programs that help music educators implement psychology-informed strategies effectively and ethically within ensemble classrooms.

Conclusions

This study addressed an important gap in literature at the intersection of music education, adolescent mental health, and classroom ensemble participation by experimentally examining psychology-informed strategies within a secondary choral setting. While there have been studies linking mental health and music, and studies regarding wellbeing in group music activities, there have been no previous experimental studies conducting with the purpose of developing specific targeted psychological interventions that could assist students in secondary classroom ensembles with their mental health and overall wellbeing.

With this study, I sought to find psychological interventions that could be implemented in a choral music classroom with a small amount of training by any choral music teacher to support their students' mental health and wellbeing while also providing improvements to the emotional aspects of their musical performance. My findings could be useful in furthering the understanding of music as something that is foundational to life and overall wellbeing, promoting wellness in the music ensemble classroom, and improved mental health for the students exposed to these interventions.

Music classrooms offer a unique environment where emotional expression, social connection, and creative engagement naturally intersect. By providing evidence for the value of psychology-informed strategies when integrated into choral music classrooms, the music educators of today and tomorrow can use these tools to help cultivate musicians who are not only artistically skilled but also emotionally resilient, mentally healthy, and capable of navigating the complex challenges of modern life.

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Appendix A – Intervention Protocol

Prior to interventions:

- All students given pretest survey

Intervention 1: Box Breathing

- Students will be led through standard choral music abdominal breathing, placing hands between rib cage and hip bones to ensure deep inhalation is taking place. Students will take 2-3 of these deep breaths.
- Students will be taken through box breathing
 - “Class, now I am going to take you through something called box breathing. If you have not heard of it, that’s ok, it’s a pretty easy thing to learn as long as you can count to 4. As a reminder, if at any point this is too stressful or you feel the need to sit out, you are welcome to take a seat, ask your choir director for permission to leave the room, or even ask for a pass to the counselor if you are feeling really anxious. First, you take a deep abdominal breath like we just practiced for a count of 4, try it with me, 1-2-3-4. Now, hold with that breath in for a count of 4, 1-2-3-4. Now, slowly exhale for 4, 1-2-3-4. Last, hold with that breath exhaled, 1-2-3-4. Ok, now that we know how that goes, we are going to practice it a few times, in-2-3-4, hold-2-3-4, out-2-3-4, hold-2-3-4. One more time, in-2-3-4, hold-2-3-4, out-2-3-4, hold 2-3-4.”
 - “Ok, now here is the part that is a little different than your normal choir breathing. This particular type of breathing is not just good for singing, it is also really helpful for anxiety. If you’re not familiar with anxiety, that’s when you’re stressed out or scared about something to the point that it might make you feel a little sick, and it’s really hard to get that thing out of your head. It happens to pretty much everyone at some point, and it’s not fun, but there are some really good ways you can help your body regulate when you’re feeling anxious, and box breathing is one of them. So this time, when we do the box breathing, I want you to think of something that has been stressing you out. Maybe don’t pick something really big and stressful, pick something kind of mid-level stressful, like worrying about a test coming up next period.”
 - Take a pause. “Ok, do you have your mid-level stressful thing in mind? With that thing in mind, let’s do three rounds of box breathing. Ready, in-2-3-4, hold-2-3-4, out-2-3-4, hold-2-3-4. Again, in-2-3-4, hold-2-3-4, out-2-3-4, hold-2-3-4. One more time, in-2-3-4, hold-2-3-4, out-2-3-4, hold-2-3-4. Hopefully that helped you feel a little better, a little more regulated, it might take some practice for it to help, so try it when you have little things in your life that stress you out. When your mom tells you to clean your room when you’re in the middle of doing your homework and you just want to explode, try box breathing first and see if that helps you be a little calmer when you address the situation.”

Intervention 2: “Magnify” technique.

- Students will go through a scenario thinking about their next upcoming performance, first imagining everything that could possibly go wrong, then imagining the best possible outcome, then brainstorming the most likely outcome.

- o “Ok, this one may be a little different. You don’t have to raise your hand, but are any of you nervous about performing? You get up on stage, and get a bit of stage fright or anxiety and maybe feel butterflies in your stomach or feel like you might throw up? That is a really normal thing, and I want to try something to see if we can help reduce some of that anxiety about performing. Just like before, if at any point this is too stressful or you feel the need to sit out, you are welcome to take a seat, ask your choir director for permission to leave the room, or even ask for a pass to the counselor if you are feeling really anxious. This one might stress you out just a little at first, but if you stick with me, I think it will really help make performing feel a little less scary.”
- o “First, I want you to think of your upcoming performance. It is at [location], on [date]. One of the most stressful parts of a performance is worrying that something will go wrong, so I want you to take a moment and imagine absolutely everything that could possibly go wrong. It’s ok if those thoughts are both totally reasonable things like you start to sing and have a frog in your throat and it’s really loud (happened to me during my first solo), or your piano player drops their music and stops playing (happened to me in college), or it can be rather absurd things like a light crashing down on the stage. Whatever your brain wants to worry about with the most horrible things that could happen, let it worry for just a minute, without judging yourself for thinking something silly.”
- o “Now that you’ve thought of all of those terrible things that can happen, I want you to put all of those terrible things in a box for a moment, and set them to the side. We’re going to think about the best possible outcome now. If absolutely everything went the best it possibly could at this performance, what would that look like? Think about things like everyone coming up to you afterward and saying your performance was incredible, gave them goosebumps, made them cry. Think about your family and friends offering to buy you ice cream, or giving you flowers or presents because it was so amazing. You can let these thoughts get a little absurd too, think about if Taylor Swift was somehow at the concert and asked your choir to come perform at the Eras tour. Again, don’t judge yourself and let it be a little silly.”
- o “Next, I want you to take back out that box of terrible things, and put your box of wonderful things next to it. Think about your terrible things one by one, and try to consider how likely they are to happen. Getting a frog in your throat is probably the most likely to happen, like I said it did happen to me on my very first solo ever. Since that day, I have performed hundreds of times, and it has never happened again, so that is what, maybe at most a 1 in 100 chance? So it’s possible, but is it really likely? And even if it happens, is it going to ruin the rest of the performance? Not if you are prepared to keep going no matter what happens, after that a few people noticed, but most people congratulated me on doing a fantastic job after that rough start, they didn’t focus on the mistake but on how I came back from it. Same story with the piano player dropping his music, I kept singing, he came back in, and I was praised for continuing on despite things getting tricky. And again, that was maybe at most a 1 in 100 chance of happening. Some slightly more common things that could happen are someone locking their knees and passing out during a performance, but even that is probably a 1 in 25 or

maybe 1 in 50 chance, and when it does happen, the people around them usually step in to help catch them and help them sit down, and the performance continues. If something catastrophic happens, which by my estimates is at most a 1 in 1,000 chance, your director will be the one to take charge, and one of the most beautiful things in the world is people coming together to help other people when something bad happens. You might be thinking, what if we just sing really badly? Well, that could happen, but you've prepared for this moment, you've worked really hard, you have a great director. Even if it happens, you chalk that up to a learning opportunity and make sure you practice more next time so it won't happen again."

- o "Last, let's think about the most likely scenario for this performance. You probably won't be invited to a Taylor Swift performance, but you also probably won't be booted off the stage. The most likely scenario is that you will sing and perform your very best, maybe with a small mistake or two, and your families and friends in the audience will be really proud of you. Those little mistakes will be something you can learn from, and do better next time you have a performance, because without making mistakes we don't really have anything to learn from. Next time you have a performance, try thinking through it like this, first the worst that could happen, then the best, then the most likely, and see if that helps you feel a little less anxious, because even if things aren't perfect, they will still more than likely be pretty good, and even if they're not you will learn from them."

Intervention 3: Emotion Regulation using Choral Music Literature

- Students will open their music to a selected song from their current music repertoire.
 - o "Looking at this song, let's read the lyrics together." Read lyrics, with emotional conviction. "Listening to those lyrics, what general emotion comes to mind? Looking at this chart (provided below in this document), which of the main emotions seems to fit best between Happy, Sad, Angry, Afraid, and Ashamed? Ok, looking at the emotion we chose, would you say this song is high intensity, medium intensity, or low intensity? Which of the emotions within that category seems to fit this song the best?" Read off the emotions in the selected category, there may be a few that fit, we will stick with the one that receives the most consensus from the group. This will differ in every song.
 - o "Ok, now that we have narrowed down what the main emotion is in this song, I want you to think about a time in your own life that you have felt that emotion. You do not have to share that experience out loud, it is only for you. Think about what happened that caused you to feel that emotion, and how you reacted in the moment to that emotion. Think about whether your reaction to that emotion matched the situation, or if maybe you reacted with more or less intensity than the situation may have called for. For example, if the emotion was sad, and I thought about a time I wanted cereal for breakfast, but I went to the cupboard and my son had eaten the last of the cereal, and I felt so sad that I sat down on the floor in the kitchen and cried my eyes out, that is me feeling the correct emotion, but maybe at an intensity level that didn't quite fit the situation. On the other hand, if the emotion was happy and I just found out I won a million dollars, and I just said 'oh that's nice' and went on with my day, again that is the right emotion but too low of an intensity for the situation. It's not necessarily a bad or good thing to react to

your emotions with the wrong intensity, just something to be aware of and see if you can figure out why your reactions don't quite match."

- "Going back to your experience with the emotion we just named for this song, I want you to read the words to yourself silently, picturing that experience you had with this emotion while you read the words. See if you can make a deeper emotional connection to the song by thinking about your own life, and connecting to what the words really mean. Now, with that connection in mind, we are going to sing through the song all together. We are not going to worry as much about right or wrong notes, we are just focusing on singing this song with a deeper connection to the emotion because of our own experiences. While we are doing that, I want you to think about letting the song be your expression of that emotion, so you can let go of it if you feel like you need to."
- Students will then sing through the song, focusing on their own emotional experience. I will not ask them to share what that was like for them, as that will be part of the posttest they will take.

After intervention:

- One week after the intervention, the researcher will return, give the final posttest, and conduct interviews with members of the experimental group.

Intensity of Feelings chart to be used with intervention 3

Adapted From and Reproduced by Permission from Julia West

Intensity of Feelings	HAPPY	SAD	ANGRY	AFRAID	ASHAMED
HIGH	Elated Excited Overjoyed Thrilled Exuberant Ecstatic Fired up Passionate	Depressed Agonized Alone Hurt Dejected Hopeless Sorrowful Miserable	Furious Enraged Outraged Boiling Irate Seething Loathsome Betrayed	Terrified Horrified Scared stiff Petrified Fearful Panicky Frantic Shocked	Sorrowful Remorseful Defamed Worthless Disgraced Dishonored Mortified Admonished
MEDIUM	Cheerful Gratified Good Relieved Satisfied Glowing	Heartbroken Somber Lost Distressed Let Down Melancholy	Upset Mad Defended Frustrated Agitated Disgusted	Apprehensive Frightened Threatened Insecure Uneasy Intimidated	Apologetic Unworthy Sneaky Guilty Embarrassed Secretive
LOW	Glad Contented Pleasant Tender Pleased Mellow	Unhappy Moody Blue Upset Disappointed Dissatisfied	Perturbed Annoyed Uptight Resistant Irritated Touchy	Cautious Nervous Worried Timid Unsure Anxious	Bashful Ridiculous Regretful Uncomfortable Pitied Silly

Appendix B – Pretest Survey

Dear participant,

Thank you (and your parents) for agreeing to take part in this study, titled “How Can We Help? Wellbeing Interventions for Choral Music Ensembles.”

The purpose of this study is to identify potential ways choir directors and directors of other music ensembles can support the mental health and emotional wellbeing of their students using both the power of music and techniques from the field of psychology. You will be completing a short questionnaire about emotions, mental health, your choir experience, and a few demographic questions, then one group will receive the interventions while the other group is done after the test. If you are in the intervention group, then you will take one more very similar survey afterward. After that, if you would be willing to participate in an interview with me (with your parent or guardian present), I will get in touch with you to schedule that.

This questionnaire should take no more than 20 minutes, all other participation will be during choir class, and the follow up questionnaire will be about 20 minutes. If you choose to participate in the interview, expect to spent approximately 30-60 minutes. Your responses will be kept confidential, and I will only know you by your folder numbers. No information that can identify you will be released to anyone else.

The risks to you as a result of this study have been identified as potential emotional distress and anxiety, both of which I have made preparations to help you with if they should arise. Benefits of this study include the potential to further knowledge of music educators in how to best support the students in their programs.

You must have parental consent to participate in this study. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you will not be penalized for refusing to participate. You are free to withdraw your assent and end your participation at any time, without penalty, by contacting me.

If you have any questions or need clarification, please contact me by email at jdw0169@auburn.edu and I will be happy to help with any concerns you may have.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,
Jess Walls

Music and Emotion Survey

Please read all questions carefully and select the answer that applies to you, with a rating ranging from *not like me at all* to a rating of *exactly like me*.
Remember to answer based on your own experiences and feelings, not on what you think the “right” answer is.
 If any question makes you feel uncomfortable, feel free to skip that question and answer the other questions. If at any point you decide you are no longer comfortable participating, you are free to leave the questionnaire blank.

Emotions	A lot unlike me	A bit unlike me	A bit like me	A lot like me
1. I feel like I am in control of my own emotions.				
2. I immediately understand what emotions I am feeling as soon as I feel them.				
3. I know what to do when I feel a difficult emotion.				
4. I allow myself to feel emotions without judging myself for having them.				
5. When I feel an emotion, sometimes I act in ways that I later regret.				
6. When I feel emotional, I listen to music.				
7. When I feel emotional, I sing or play a musical instrument.				
8. If I am emotional at school, my choir class usually makes me feel better.				
9. I have had a strong emotional reaction to one or more songs we have performed or sung in choir.				
10. I have used music from choir to think through personal events similar to those presented in the song.				
11. I have been uncomfortable in choir because an intensely emotional song hit “too close to home” and made me feel strong emotions.				
12. I feel safe to be myself in choir.				
13. I feel supported and understood by my choir director.				
14. Being involved in choir has made me feel better.				
15. Being involved in choir has made me feel worse.				

Mood and anxiety	A lot unlike me	A bit unlike me	A bit like me	A lot like me
16. I have felt depressed (extremely sad) this school year.				
17. I have been so sad this year that I have considered whether or not I may need help.				
18. I regularly feel stressed out about events in my life.				
19. I feel anxious or nervous prior to a choir performance.				
20. I am so anxious before a performance that I sometimes make mistakes or even have panic attacks.				
21. When I am anxious, I know how to do things that help.				

Over the last two weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems?

Anxiety	Not at all	Several days	More than half the days	Nearly every day
22. Feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge				
23. Not being able to stop or control worrying				
24. Worrying too much about different things				
25. Trouble relaxing				
26. Being so restless that it is hard to sit still				
27. Becoming easily annoyed or irritable				
28. Feeling afraid, as if something awful might happen				

General Wellbeing	None of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	Often	All of the time
29. I've been feeling optimistic about the future					
30. I've been feeling useful					
31. I've been feeling relaxed					
32. I've been dealing with problems well					
33. I've been thinking clearly					
34. I've been feeling close to other people					
35. I've been able to make up my own mind about things					

Please rate your agreement with the items below:

Emotions	Almost never	Sometimes	About half the time	Most of the time	Almost Always
36. I pay attention to how I feel					
37. I have no idea how I am feeling					
38. I have difficulty making sense out of my feelings					
39. I care about what I am feeling					
40. I am confused about how I feel					
41. When I'm upset, I acknowledge my emotions					
42. When I'm upset, I become embarrassed for feeling that way					
43. When I'm upset, I have difficulty getting work done					
44. When I'm upset, I become out of control					
45. When I'm upset, I believe that I will end up feeling very depressed					
46. When I'm upset, I have difficulty focusing on other things					
47. When I'm upset, I feel guilty for feeling that way					
48. When I'm upset, I have difficulty concentrating					
49. When I'm upset, I have difficulty controlling my behaviors					
50. When I'm upset, I believe there is nothing I can do to make myself feel better					
51. When I'm upset, I become irritated with myself for feeling that way					
52. When I'm upset, I lose control over my behavior					
53. When I'm upset, it takes me a long time to feel better					

Please write your choir folder number in the blank provided: _____
<p>Gender identity</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Non-binary <input type="checkbox"/> Choose not to disclose
<p>Grade level</p> <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> 8 <input type="checkbox"/> 9 <input type="checkbox"/> 10 <input type="checkbox"/> 11 <input type="checkbox"/> 12
<p>What is your ethnic/racial background?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Black/African-American <input type="checkbox"/> Native American <input type="checkbox"/> White (Hispanic) <input type="checkbox"/> White (non-Hispanic) <input type="checkbox"/> Other/mixed race
<p>Which of the following best describes your family's income?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Low – We struggle to make ends meet, rely on assistance such as free lunch <input type="checkbox"/> Between Low and Middle <input type="checkbox"/> Middle – We are fairly comfortable most of the time, can sometimes do “extras” like vacations, but nothing extravagant <input type="checkbox"/> Between Middle and High <input type="checkbox"/> High – Our family doesn't seem to have to worry much about money, we go on frequent vacations and do lots of extracurricular activities <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure/do not want to answer – my family does not disclose monetary issues with me or would not like me answering this question
<p>What is your weighted GPA or average grades?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> 4.0 + - A+ student taking AP or dual credit courses <input type="checkbox"/> 3.0-3.9 – A and B student <input type="checkbox"/> 2.0-3.0 – B and C student <input type="checkbox"/> Under 2.0 – C student or below <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure/don't keep track
<p>Do you identify as someone struggling with your mental health?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<p>What mental health issues do you struggle with?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Depression (excessive sadness) <input type="checkbox"/> Anxiety (frequent feelings of being overwhelmed or anxious) <input type="checkbox"/> Other (name or describe)

Appendix C – Posttest Survey

Dear participant,

Thank you (and your parents) for agreeing to take part in this study, titled “How Can We Help? Wellbeing Interventions for Choral Music Ensembles.”

The purpose of this study is to identify potential ways choir directors and directors of other music ensembles can support the mental health and emotional wellbeing of their students using both the power of music and techniques from the field of psychology. You will be completing a short questionnaire about emotions, mental health, your choir experience, and a few demographic questions, then one group will receive the interventions while the other group is done after the test. If you are in the intervention group, then you will take one more very similar survey afterward. After that, if you would be willing to participate in an interview with me (with your parent or guardian present), I will get in touch with you to schedule that.

This questionnaire should take no more than 20 minutes, all other participation will be during choir class, and the follow up questionnaire will be about 20 minutes. If you choose to participate in the interview, expect to spent approximately 30-60 minutes. Your responses will be kept confidential, and I will only know you by your folder numbers. No information that can identify you will be released to anyone else.

The risks to you as a result of this study have been identified as potential emotional distress and anxiety, both of which I have made preparations to help you with if they should arise. Benefits of this study include the potential to further knowledge of music educators in how to best support the students in their programs.

You must have parental consent to participate in this study. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you will not be penalized for refusing to participate. You are free to withdraw your assent and end your participation at any time, without penalty, by contacting me.

If you have any questions or need clarification, please contact me by email at jdww0169@auburn.edu and I will be happy to help with any concerns you may have.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,
Jess Walls

Music and Emotion Survey

Please read all questions carefully and select the answer that applies to you, with a rating ranging from *not like me at all* to a rating of *exactly like me*.

Remember to answer based on your own experiences and feelings, not on what you think the “right” answer is.

If any question makes you feel uncomfortable, feel free to skip that question and answer the other questions. If at any point you decide you are no longer comfortable participating, you are free to leave the questionnaire blank.

Emotions	A lot unlike me	A bit unlike me	A bit like me	A lot like me
1. I feel like I am in control of my own emotions.				
2. I immediately understand what emotions I am feeling as soon as I feel them.				
3. I know what to do when I feel a difficult emotion.				
4. I allow myself to feel emotions without judging myself for having them.				
5. When I feel an emotion, sometimes I act in ways that I later regret.				
6. When I feel emotional, I listen to music.				
7. When I feel emotional, I sing or play a musical instrument.				
8. If I am emotional at school, my choir class usually makes me feel better.				
9. I have had a strong emotional reaction to one or more songs we have performed or sung in choir.				
10. I have used music from choir to think through personal events similar to those presented in the song.				
11. I have been uncomfortable in choir because an intensely emotional song hit “too close to home” and made me feel strong emotions.				
12. I feel safe to be myself in choir.				
13. I feel supported and understood by my choir director.				
14. Being involved in choir has made me feel better.				
15. Being involved in choir has made me feel worse.				

Mood and anxiety	A lot unlike me	A bit unlike me	A bit like me	A lot like me
16. I have felt depressed (extremely sad) this school year.				
17. I have been so sad this year that I have considered whether or not I may need help.				
18. I regularly feel stressed out about events in my life.				
19. I feel anxious or nervous prior to a choir performance.				
20. I am so anxious before a performance that I sometimes make mistakes or even have panic attacks.				
21. When I am anxious, I know how to do things that help.				

Over the last two weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems?

Anxiety	Not at all	Several days	More than half the days	Nearly every day
22. Feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge				
23. Not being able to stop or control worrying				
24. Worrying too much about different things				
25. Trouble relaxing				
26. Being so restless that it is hard to sit still				
27. Becoming easily annoyed or irritable				
28. Feeling afraid, as if something awful might happen				

General Wellbeing	None of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	Often	All of the time
29. I've been feeling optimistic about the future					
30. I've been feeling useful					
31. I've been feeling relaxed					
32. I've been dealing with problems well					
33. I've been thinking clearly					
34. I've been feeling close to other people					
35. I've been able to make up my own mind about things					

Please rate your agreement with the items below:

Emotions	Almost never	Sometimes	About half the time	Most of the time	Almost Always
36. I pay attention to how I feel					
37. I have no idea how I am feeling					
38. I have difficulty making sense out of my feelings					
39. I care about what I am feeling					
40. I am confused about how I feel					
41. When I'm upset, I acknowledge my emotions					
42. When I'm upset, I become embarrassed for feeling that way					
43. When I'm upset, I have difficulty getting work done					
44. When I'm upset, I become out of control					
45. When I'm upset, I believe that I will end up feeling very depressed					
46. When I'm upset, I have difficulty focusing on other things					
47. When I'm upset, I feel guilty for feeling that way					
48. When I'm upset, I have difficulty concentrating					
49. When I'm upset, I have difficulty controlling my behaviors					
50. When I'm upset, I believe there is nothing I can do to make myself feel better					
51. When I'm upset, I become irritated with myself for feeling that way					
52. When I'm upset, I lose control over my behavior					
53. When I'm upset, it takes me a long time to feel better					

Thinking about the time since the interventions were presented in your classrooms, have you seen any change in the following issues?	Better than before	About the same as before	Worse than before
54. Anxiety			
55. Feeling positive emotions			
56. Ability to control emotions			

	Yes	No	Unsure
58. Thinking about what you learned about anxiety or emotion regulation from this study, did you find the techniques we learned helpful?			
59. Have you used the techniques you learned from this study at home or at school since you learned them?			

60. Describe, in your own words, how you have used the techniques from this study in your own life:

Appendix D – Interview Protocol

Interview questions for participants who completed the interventions. The researcher may add questions based on participant answers in order to ensure that all participant answers are fully explored.

1. What was your understanding of anxiety before the interventions 1 week ago? If you personally experienced anxiety before, describe what that was like.
 - a. If student has experienced anxiety:
 - i. Have you ever used music or any kind of breathing technique to help with your anxiety before the last 2 weeks, and if so how?
 - ii. What are some other techniques you have used to help with your anxiety, and how helpful are they?
2. Since the intervention 1 week ago, how have you used the box breathing technique in your daily life? Did you find it helpful?
3. Since the intervention 1 week ago, have you used the magnify technique in your daily life, and if so what did you use it for? Did you find it helpful? Do you think you will feel less anxiety at your next performance after using this technique?
4. Is there anything about those two interventions that you found especially helpful, and if so what was it?
 - a. Do you think these anxiety interventions could be helpful to students in other choirs, and why or why not?
 - b. Is there anything you want me, your parent/guardian, or your choir director to know about anxiety that you are not sure the adults in your life are always aware of?
 - c. Is there anything else you want to share about music and anxiety that you think is important?
5. What was your understanding of emotion before the intervention 1 week ago? Do you believe certain emotions are “good” or “bad”?
6. Since the intervention 1 week ago, has the way you think about emotion changed at all, and if so how?
7. Describe what thinking about your own emotional experience while singing the music related to that emotion was like for you. Did you find it easy or difficult to connect your life to the music?
8. Since the intervention 1 week ago, have you found yourself listening to or singing music and thinking about how the emotions in the song connect to the emotions you feel in your life? Give me an example.
 - a. Is there anything about this intervention that you found especially helpful, and if so what was it?
 - b. Was there any part of this emotion regulation technique you found stressful or uncomfortable? If so, did you feel like it was worth the discomfort in the end?
 - c. Is there anything you want me, your parent/guardian, or your choir director to know about emotions that you are not sure the adults in your life are always aware of?
 - d. Is there anything else you want to share about music and emotion that you think is important?

Appendix E – Choir Director Survey

Open-ended survey questions for choir director one month after interventions.

1. What was your impression of the interventions the students participated in during this study?
2. Since the intervention 1 month ago, have you mentioned the intervention to students in the course of your teaching?
3. Since the intervention 1 month ago, have students mentioned the intervention to you?
4. Have you seen a change in overall anxiety for the students since the intervention? If so, describe the change.
5. If your students have performed since the intervention, did you see a change in performance anxiety? If so, describe the change.
6. Have you seen a difference in the way students approach emotional regulation in the classroom since the intervention? If so, describe the change.
7. Have your students mentioned a difference in their emotional connection to the music following the intervention, either in the song we discussed or your other literature? If so, describe their reactions.
8. Have you noticed a difference in emotional engagement with the choral music literature in your students since the intervention? If so, describe the difference.
9. Have you noticed a difference in musicality and expression when students are singing the choral piece we used for the emotion regulation technique?
10. Have either you or the students applied their emotional regulation techniques to other choral literature you are performing? If so, please describe.
11. Is there any other difference you have noticed in your students since the intervention? If so, please describe.
12. Is there anything else you want to share about the interventions or your students' reactions to them that we have not already talked about?

Appendix F – Results and Data Analysis Output for Pilot Study

About the Survey Class

This pilot study was created as a part of the coursework for an Educational Research Methods course at Auburn University, with instructor approval to utilize the information learned in class to create a survey I plan to use in conducting my dissertation research. This course included thorough preparation and peer review by classmates to ensure valid survey design with satisfactory reliability scores.

Participants

A convenience sampling procedure was used to recruit participants. Volunteers from my personal Facebook page and choral director groups were invited to take the study, answering accurately as their middle school or high school selves who were involved in choir. A total number of 9 participants completed the study, with 9 usable responses (usable rate equals to 100%).

Descriptive Statistics

Demographics: As reported in Table 3, most respondents to the pilot study were female, white non-Hispanic, in 12th grade, with middle-class level income, and above a 3.0 average GPA. A small majority of 55.6% reported that they do not struggle with their mental health. The students who chose “other” on the mental health issues question indicated that they are struggling with both depression and anxiety.

Table 6*Demographics for Pilot Study*

Items	<i>n</i>	%
Gender identity		
Male	1	11.1
Female	6	66.7
Non-binary/other	1	11.1
Prefer not to say	1	11.1
Grade level		
8	3	33.3
10	1	11.1
12	5	55.6
Ethnicity/racial background		
Black/African American	1	11.1
White (Hispanic)	1	11.1
White (non-Hispanic)	7	77.8
Income		
Low/middle	1	11.1
Middle	7	77.8
Unsure/do not disclose	1	11.1
Weighted GPA/average grades		
4.0 +	3	33.3
3.0-3.9	4	44.4
Unsure/don't keep track	2	22.2
Mental health struggles		
Yes – Depression	1	11.1
Yes – Anxiety	1	11.1
Yes – Other	2	22.2
No	5	55.6

Instrument

The Music and Emotion Scale (MES) is a 22-item scale developed to assess student awareness of their own emotions, awareness of their understanding of emotion in relation to music, and awareness of their own overall mood and anxiety level.

Respondents indicate the degree they agree with questions related to their self-perception on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Not like me at all) to 7 (Exactly like me). The

three subscales were regarding Emotion, Emotion and Music, and overall Mood, with two questions being regarded individually.

The Emotion subscale is a 5-item 7-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (Not like me at all) to 7 (Exactly like me). This subscale evaluates student perception of their own ability to understand and cope with their own emotions. The current sample demonstrated adequate reliability with Cronbach's alpha equal to .67. The scale mean was 19.44 on a scale from 5 (indicating no understanding or control of emotions) to 35 (indicating high levels of understanding and control of emotions) with a standard deviation of 5.86, showing that overall participants felt like they had a mid-level understanding and control of their own personal emotions. Question 6 from the emotion subscale was assessed individually due to inconsistent reliability and showed a statistically high likelihood of an individual being able to name at least 5 emotions that they are aware they could be feeling.

The Emotion in music subscale is a 10-item 7-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (Not like me at all) to 7 (Exactly like me). This subscale evaluates student perception of their experiences either individually or in a choir setting using music as a coping tool for emotions. The current sample demonstrated adequate reliability with Cronbach's alpha equal to .73. The scale mean was 50.33 on a scale from 9 (indicating little to no use of music as a coping tool) to 63 (indicating high use of music as a coping tool) with a standard deviation of 7.11, showing that overall participants felt like they had a mid-level understanding and control of their own personal emotions. Question 14 from the emotion and music subscale was assessed individually due to inconsistent reliability and showed a statistically higher variability in whether participants felt supported and understood by their choir director.

The Mood subscale is a 5-item 7-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (Not like me at all) to 7 (Exactly like me). This subscale evaluates student perception of their own emotional state at the present time, particularly in relation to choir participation. The current sample demonstrated adequate reliability with Cronbach's alpha equal to .77. The scale mean was 28.33 on a scale from 6 (indicating no struggle with mood, depression, and anxiety) to 42 (indicating high levels of struggle with mood, depression, and anxiety) with a standard deviation of 8.00, showing that overall participants were experience mid to high levels of mood, depression, and anxiety.

Self-Reflection

Survey Feedback

The feedback I received from classmates and the professor during the development of this survey was extremely helpful. I noticed a tendency to use overly complicated phrasing and need to simplify for clarity, which I fixed in subsequent versions of my survey. Other feedback that I received after my pilot study included the need for a "choose all that apply" option in the demographics under mental health, as many individuals suffer from both depression and anxiety, and needed to select "other" in order to indicate that, rather than simply including the option to choose both.

Personal Reflection on Survey Design and Pilot Study Experience

I really appreciated all the information presented, as well as the classmate feedback when designing the survey. I felt adequately prepared to create a survey and prepared to re-design the survey following the feedback. The pilot study really highlighted just how difficult it can be to get people to participate in a survey, as I shared in multiple groups and only got nine responses. I

am very glad I got the chance to do a pilot study, as it showed me a few things I plan to change and do differently in the actual study.

Actual Study – What Would I Do The Same/Different?

In the actual study, it will not be random people completing the survey, which will change the response rate. The obvious change will be to make the demographic option for mental health a “choose all that apply” type question, but there will be other changes. I plan to find and utilize an existing emotional understanding scale that has already been validated for reliability, to provide accurate pre and post test data without having to develop an entire scale for myself. I will still use a large portion of the survey items I developed for this course in the pretest, in order to gather some baseline data, but the additional emotion scale will be used in pre and posttests, along with specific questions I still need to develop regarding the efficacy of the specific interventions in the experimental procedures.

Reliability Statistics

<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>No. of Items</i>
.580	6

Item Statistics

<i>Items</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
1. I feel in control of my own emotions most of the time.	4.78	1.394	9
2. I immediately understand what emotions I am feeling as soon as I feel them.	4.11	1.900	9
3. I know what to do when I feel a difficult emotion.	3.67	1.803	9
4. I allow myself to feel emotions without judging myself for having them.	3.33	1.803	9
5. When I feel an emotion, sometimes I act in ways that I later regret.	3.56	1.944	9
6. I can name more than 5 emotions that I could potentially feel.	6.11	1.269	9

Item-Total Statistics

<i>Items</i>	<i>Scale M if Item Deleted</i>	<i>Scale Var. if Item Deleted</i>	<i>Corrected Item-Total Correlation</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted</i>
1. I feel in control of my own emotions most of the time.	20.78	29.694	.141	.598

2. I immediately understand what emotions I am feeling as soon as I feel them.	21.44	21.278	.507	.437
3. I know what to do when I feel a difficult emotion.	21.89	20.111	.644	.368
4. I allow myself to feel emotions without judging myself for having them.	22.22	27.194	.177	.598
5. When I feel an emotion, sometimes I act in ways that I later regret.	22.00	20.000	.575	.396
6. I can name more than 5 emotions that I could potentially feel.	19.44	34.278	-.142	.673

Scale Statistics

<i>M</i>	<i>Var</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>No. Items</i>
25.56	33.778	5.812	6

Reliability Statistics

<i>Cronbach's alpha</i>	<i>No of Items</i>
.562	10

After removing 6 – Scale Statistics

<i>M</i>	<i>Var</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>No. of Items</i>
19.44	34.278	5.855	5

Item Statistics

<i>Items</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
7. When I feel emotional, I listen to music.	5.89	1.054	9
8. When I feel emotional, I sing or play a musical instrument.	5.33	1.118	9
9. If I am emotional at school, my choir class usually makes me feel better.	6.11	.782	9
10. I have had a strong emotional reaction to one or more songs we have performed or sung in choir.	5.44	2.068	9
11. I have used music from choir to think through personal events similar to those presented in the song.	4.78	2.108	9
12. I have been uncomfortable in choir because an intensely emotional song hit “too close to home” and made me feel strong emotions.	3.11	2.315	9
13. I feel safe to be myself in choir.	6.33	.500	9
14. I feel supported and understood by my choir director.	5.11	1.900	9
15. Being involved in choir has made me feel better.	6.56	.527	9
16. Being involved in choir has made me feel worse.	6.78	.441	9

Item-Total Statistics

<i>Items</i>	<i>Scale Mean if Item Deleted</i>	<i>Scale Variance if Item Deleted</i>	<i>Corrected Item-Total Correlation</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted</i>
7. When I feel emotional, I listen to music.	49.56	38.028	.318	.525
8. When I feel emotional, I sing or play a musical instrument.	50.11	38.611	.246	.538
9. If I am emotional at school, my choir class usually makes me feel better.	49.33	39.000	.376	.526
10. I have had a strong emotional reaction to one or more songs we have performed or sung in choir.	50.00	23.250	.790	.297
11. I have used music from choir to think through personal events similar to those presented in the song.	50.67	24.000	.718	.331
12. I have been uncomfortable in choir because an intensely emotional song hit "too close to home" and made me feel strong emotions.	52.33	29.000	.358	.503
13. I feel safe to be myself in choir.	49.11	42.111	.141	.560
14. I feel supported and understood by my choir director.	50.33	50.500	-.401	.729
15. Being involved in choir has made me feel better.	48.89	40.611	.356	.540
16. Being involved in choir has made me feel worse.	48.67	42.500	.101	.564

Scale Statistics

<i>Mean</i>	<i>Variance</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>N of Items</i>
55.44	43.278	6.579	10

Reliability Statistics

<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>No. of Items</i>
.767	6

After removing 14: Scale Statistics

<i>M</i>	<i>Var</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>No of Items</i>
50.33	50.500	7.106	9

Item Statistics

<i>Items</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
17. I have felt depressed (extremely sad) this school year.	5.33	2.236	9
18. I have been so sad this year that I have considered whether or not I may need help.	4.56	2.555	9
19. I regularly feel stressed out about events in my life.	6.11	.782	9
20. I feel anxious or nervous prior to a choir performance.	4.89	2.261	9
21. I am so anxious before a performance that I sometimes make mistakes or even have panic attacks.	3.11	1.833	9
22. When I am anxious, I know how to do things that help.	4.33	1.581	9

Item-Total Statistics

<i>Items</i>	<i>Scale M. if Item Deleted</i>	<i>Scale Var. if Item Deleted</i>	<i>Corrected Item-Total Correlation</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted</i>
17. I have felt depressed (extremely sad) this school year.	23.00	41.500	.607	.704
18. I have been so sad this year that I have considered whether or not I may need help.	23.78	39.694	.552	.728
19. I regularly feel stressed out about events in my life.	22.22	54.944	.729	.738
20. I feel anxious or nervous prior to a choir performance.	23.44	47.278	.373	.774
21. I am so anxious before a performance that I sometimes make mistakes or even have panic attacks.	25.22	45.444	.615	.707
22. When I am anxious, I know how to do things that help.	24.00	50.250	.502	.737

Scale Statistics

<i>M</i>	<i>Var.</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>No of Items</i>
28.33	64.000	8.000	6

Reliability Statistics

<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>N of Items</i>
.767	6

Item Statistics

<i>Items</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
17. I have felt depressed (extremely sad) this school year.	5.33	2.236	9
18. I have been so sad this year that I have considered whether or not I may need help.	4.56	2.555	9
19. I regularly feel stressed out about events in my life.	6.11	.782	9
20. I feel anxious or nervous prior to a choir performance.	4.89	2.261	9
21. I am so anxious before a performance that I sometimes make mistakes or even have panic attacks.	3.11	1.833	9
22. When I am anxious, I know how to do things that help.	4.33	1.581	9

Item-Total Statistics

<i>Items</i>	<i>Scale Mean if Item Deleted</i>	<i>Scale Variance if Item Deleted</i>	<i>Corrected Item-Total Correlation</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted</i>
17. I have felt depressed (extremely sad) this school year.	23.00	41.500	.607	.704
18. I have been so sad this year that I have considered whether or not I may need help.	23.78	39.694	.552	.728
19. I regularly feel stressed out about events in my life.	22.22	54.944	.729	.738
20. I feel anxious or nervous prior to a choir performance.	23.44	47.278	.373	.774
21. I am so anxious before a performance that I sometimes make mistakes or even have panic attacks.	25.22	45.444	.615	.707
22. When I am anxious, I know how to do things that help.	24.00	50.250	.502	.737

Scale Statistics

<i>M</i>	<i>Var</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>No of Items</i>
28.33	64.000	8.000	6

Frequencies and Percentages for Survey Items

	<i>Items</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Gender Identity	Male	1	11.1%
	Female	6	66.7%
	Non-binary / other	1	11.1%
	Prefer not to say	1	11.1%
Grade Level	<i>Items</i>		
	8	3	33.3%
	10	1	11.1%
Ethnicity/racial background	<i>Items</i>		
	Black/African American	1	11.1%
	White (Hispanic)	1	11.1%
Which of the following best describes your family's income?	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	Between low and middle	1	11.1%
	Middle - we are fairly comfortable most of the time, can sometimes do "extras" like vacations, but nothing extravagant	7	77.8%
	Unsure/do not want to answer - my family does not disclose monetary issues with me or would not like me answering this question	1	11.1%
What is your weighted GPA or average grades?	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	4.0 + - A+ student taking AP or dual credit courses	3	33.3%
	3.0-3.9 - A and B student	4	44.4%
	Unsure/don't keep track	2	22.2%
Do you identify as someone struggling with your mental health?	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	Yes	4	44.4%
What mental health issues do you struggle with?	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	Depression (excessive sadness)	1	11.1%
	Anxiety (frequent feelings of being overwhelmed or anxious)	1	11.1%
	Other (name or describe)	2	22.2%
	Missing	5	55.6%
1. I feel in control of my own emotions most of the time.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	A lot unlike me	1	11.1%
	A bit unlike me	1	11.1%
	A bit like me	4	44.4%
	A lot like me	3	33.3%

2. I immediately understand what emotions I am feeling as soon as I feel them.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	Not like me at all	1	11.1%
	A lot unlike me	1	11.1%
	A bit unlike me	2	22.2%
	A bit like me	2	22.2%
3. I know what to do when I feel a difficult emotion.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	Not like me at all	2	22.2%
	A bit unlike me	2	22.2%
	Not like me or unlike me	1	11.1%
	A bit like me	3	33.3%
4. I allow myself to feel emotions without judging myself for having them.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	Not like me at all	2	22.2%
	A lot unlike me	1	11.1%
	A bit unlike me	2	22.2%
	Not like me or unlike me	1	11.1%
	A bit like me	2	22.2%
5. When I feel an emotion, sometimes I act in ways that I later regret.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	Not like me at all	1	11.1%
	A lot unlike me	3	33.3%
	A bit unlike me	1	11.1%
	A bit like me	2	22.2%
6. I can name more than 5 emotions that I could potentially feel.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	A bit unlike me	1	11.1%
	A lot like me	4	44.4%
7. When I feel emotional, I listen to music.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	Not like me or unlike me	1	11.1%
	A bit like me	2	22.2%
	A lot like me	3	33.3%
8. When I feel emotional, I sing or play a musical instrument.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	A bit unlike me	1	11.1%
	A bit like me	4	44.4%
	A lot like me	3	33.3%
9. If I am emotional at school, my choir class usually makes me feel better.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	A bit like me	2	22.2%
	A lot like me	4	44.4%
	Exactly like me	3	33.3%

10. I have had a strong emotional reaction to one or more songs we have performed or sung in choir.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	Not like me at all	1	11.1%
	A bit unlike me	1	11.1%
	A lot like me	4	44.4%
11. I have used music from choir to think through personal events similar to those presented in the song.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	Not like me at all	1	11.1%
	A lot unlike me	1	11.1%
	Not like me or unlike me	1	11.1%
12. I have been uncomfortable in choir because an intensely emotional song hit “too close to home” and made me feel strong emotions.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	Not like me at all	4	44.4%
	A lot unlike me	1	11.1%
	A bit like me	2	22.2%
13. I feel safe to be myself in choir.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	A lot like me	6	66.7%
	Exactly like me	3	33.3%
	14. I feel supported and understood by my choir director.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>
Not like me at all		1	11.1%
A bit unlike me		1	11.1%
A bit like me		1	11.1%
A lot like me		5	55.6%
Exactly like me		1	11.1%
15. Being involved in choir has made me feel better.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	A lot like me	4	44.4%
	Exactly like me	5	55.6%
16. Being involved in choir has made me feel worse.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	A lot like me	2	22.2%
	Exactly like me	7	77.8%
17. I have felt depressed (extremely sad) this school year.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	Not like me at all	1	11.1%
	A lot unlike me	1	11.1%
	A lot like me	4	44.4%
	Exactly like me	3	33.3%
18. I have been so sad this year that I have considered whether I may need help.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	Not like me at all	2	22.2%
	A lot unlike me	1	11.1%
	A bit like me	2	22.2%
	A lot like me	1	11.1%
	Exactly like me	3	33.3%
<i>Selected Choices</i>		<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>

19. I regularly feel stressed out about events in my life.	A bit like me	2	22.2%
	A lot like me	4	44.4%
	Exactly like me	3	33.3%
20. I feel anxious or nervous prior to a choir performance.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	A lot unlike me	3	33.3%
	A bit like me	1	11.1%
	A lot like me	2	22.2%
	Exactly like me	3	33.3%
21. I am so anxious before a performance that I sometimes make mistakes or even have panic attacks.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	Not like me at all	2	22.2%
	A lot unlike me	1	11.1%
	A bit unlike me	3	33.3%
	Not like me or unlike me	2	22.2%
	Exactly like me	1	11.1%
22. When I am anxious, I know how to do things that help.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	A lot unlike me	1	11.1%
	A bit unlike me	2	22.2%
	Not like me or unlike me	2	22.2%
	A bit like me	2	22.2%
	A lot like me	1	11.1%
Which of the following best describes your family's income?	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	Between low and middle	1	11.1%
	Middle - we are fairly comfortable most of the time, can sometimes do "extras" like vacations, but nothing extravagant	7	77.8%
	Unsure/do not want to answer - my family does not disclose monetary issues with me or would not like me answering this question	1	11.1%
What is your weighted GPA or average grades?	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	4.0 + - A+ student taking AP or dual credit courses	3	33.3%
	3.0-3.9 - A and B student	4	44.4%
	Unsure/don't keep track	2	22.2%
Do you identify as someone struggling with your mental health?	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	Yes	4	44.4%
	No	5	55.6%
What mental health issues do you struggle with?	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	Depression (excessive sadness)	1	11.1%
	Anxiety (frequent feelings of being overwhelmed or anxious)	1	11.1%
	Other (name or describe)	2	22.2%
	Missing	5	55.6%
	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>

1. I feel in control of my own emotions most of the time.	A lot unlike me	1	11.1%
	A bit unlike me	1	11.1%
	A bit like me	4	44.4%
	A lot like me	3	33.3%
2. I immediately understand what emotions I am feeling as soon as I feel them.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	Not like me at all	1	11.1%
	A lot unlike me	1	11.1%
	A bit unlike me	2	22.2%
	A bit like me	2	22.2%
	A lot like me	3	33.3%
3. I know what to do when I feel a difficult emotion.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	Not like me at all	2	22.2%
	A bit unlike me	2	22.2%
	Not like me or unlike me	1	11.1%
	A bit like me	3	33.3%
	A lot like me	1	11.1%
4. I allow myself to feel emotions without judging myself for having them.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	Not like me at all	2	22.2%
	A lot unlike me	1	11.1%
	A bit unlike me	2	22.2%
	Not like me or unlike me	1	11.1%
	A bit like me	2	22.2%
	A lot like me	1	11.1%
5. When I feel an emotion, sometimes I act in ways that I later regret.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	Not like me at all	1	11.1%
	A lot unlike me	3	33.3%
	A bit unlike me	1	11.1%
	A bit like me	2	22.2%
	A lot like me	2	22.2%
6. I can name more than 5 emotions that I could potentially feel.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	A bit unlike me	1	11.1%
	A lot like me	4	44.4%
	Exactly like me	4	44.4%
7. When I feel emotional, I listen to music.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	Not like me or unlike me	1	11.1%
	A bit like me	2	22.2%
	A lot like me	3	33.3%
	Exactly like me	3	33.3%
8. When I feel emotional, I sing or play a musical instrument.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	A bit unlike me	1	11.1%
	A bit like me	4	44.4%
	A lot like me	3	33.3%
	Exactly like me	1	11.1%
	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	A bit like me	2	22.2%

9. If I am emotional at school, my choir class usually makes me feel better.	A lot like me	4	44.4%
	Exactly like me	3	33.3%
10. I have had a strong emotional reaction to one or more songs we have performed or sung in choir.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	Not like me at all	1	11.1%
	A bit unlike me	1	11.1%
	A lot like me	4	44.4%
	Exactly like me	3	33.3%
11. I have used music from choir to think through personal events similar to those presented in the song.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	Not like me at all	1	11.1%
	A lot unlike me	1	11.1%
	Not like me or unlike me	1	11.1%
	A bit like me	2	22.2%
	A lot like me	2	22.2%
	Exactly like me	2	22.2%
12. I have been uncomfortable in choir because an intensely emotional song hit “too close to home” and made me feel strong emotions.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	Not like me at all	4	44.4%
	A lot unlike me	1	11.1%
	A bit like me	2	22.2%
	A lot like me	2	22.2%
13. I feel safe to be myself in choir.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	A lot like me	6	66.7%
	Exactly like me	3	33.3%
14. I feel supported and understood by my choir director.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	Not like me at all	1	11.1%
	A bit unlike me	1	11.1%
	A bit like me	1	11.1%
	A lot like me	5	55.6%
	Exactly like me	1	11.1%
15. Being involved in choir has made me feel better.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	A lot like me	4	44.4%
	Exactly like me	5	55.6%
16. Being involved in choir has made me feel worse.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	A lot like me	2	22.2%
	Exactly like me	7	77.8%
17. I have felt depressed (extremely sad) this school year.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	Not like me at all	1	11.1%
	A lot unlike me	1	11.1%
	A lot like me	4	44.4%
	Exactly like me	3	33.3%
	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	Not like me at all	2	22.2%

18. I have been so sad this year that I have considered whether or not I may need help.	A lot unlike me	1	11.1%
	A bit like me	2	22.2%
	A lot like me	1	11.1%
	Exactly like me	3	33.3%
19. I regularly feel stressed out about events in my life.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	A bit like me	2	22.2%
	A lot like me	4	44.4%
	Exactly like me	3	33.3%
20. I feel anxious or nervous prior to a choir performance.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	A lot unlike me	3	33.3%
	A bit like me	1	11.1%
	A lot like me	2	22.2%
21. I am so anxious before a performance that I sometimes make mistakes or even have panic attacks.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	Not like me at all	2	22.2%
	A lot unlike me	1	11.1%
	A bit unlike me	3	33.3%
	Not like me or unlike me	2	22.2%
22. When I am anxious, I know how to do things that help.	<i>Selected Choices</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
	A lot unlike me	1	11.1%
	A bit unlike me	2	22.2%
	Not like me or unlike me	2	22.2%
	A bit like me	2	22.2%
	A lot like me	1	11.1%
	Exactly like me	1	11.1%

Appendix G – Information Letter and Consent/Assent for Experimental Sites

Hello XXXX ISD parents and guardians,

My name is Jess Walls, and I am a PhD student in music education at Auburn University. My previous experience includes teaching music at the elementary level, choir at the middle school and high school levels, and music appreciation at the college level.

Your wonderful choir directors Ms. Blakey and Mr. Shen have graciously agreed to open their choir room for a few days to complete research for the first phase of my doctoral dissertation. For that research, I need a little help from you and your choral music students. I will give details about my research in the next paragraph and will be completely transparent along the way regarding what instructional techniques I am using in the Clements HS choir classroom. You and your students' participation is completely voluntary, with no penalties for choosing not to participate.

My research is generally about using music to support student wellbeing, with 3 specific techniques being introduced for this study. This research has been presented at music education conferences at both the state and national level.

- Technique 1: box breathing, a breathing technique that improves both choral singing and can be used outside of the classroom to assist with anxiety.
- Technique 2: “magnify”, I help students talk through potentially distressing performance anxiety situations to help the event feel less overwhelming and scary.

We look at:

- The worst that could happen
- The best that could happen
- The “most likely scenario”
- Technique 3: emotion regulation through choral music, designed to help them have a deeper emotional understanding of the music they are learning in choir to potentially reduce overall anxiety and increase musicality by:
 - Connecting it to specific emotional vocabulary
 - Internally connecting it to a situation where they personally have experienced this emotion
 - Singing through the song while picturing the event in which they experienced this emotion

Throughout all three techniques, students will be reminded that if the technique is causing them distress, they are welcome to step out, sit down, or request a pass to the counselor if they feel too highly distressed. I am personally certified in mental health first aid and will be keeping a conscious eye on all students to ensure that I am aware of any students who may need additional support.

Regarding data collection and confidentiality, student names will be kept completely confidential, being identified by their choir folder numbers on the pre- and post-surveys I give them to collect the data. I will also be asking for a few volunteers to complete a short interview with me after the interventions, which parents are invited to be present for either in person or via

zoom. Interview participants will be given pseudonyms, and their interview data will be connected to their survey data using their folder number. All research activities have been reviewed and approved by Auburn University's Institutional Review Board, Fort Bend ISD, and Clements campus administration, and follow all guidelines for ethical human subject research. If you have any questions about any part of the study, please reach out as soon as possible to me via email at jdw0169@auburn.edu, and I will respond within 24-48 hours. If you approve of your student participating in this research study, please look over the attached parental consent/student assent document, and both you and your student sign the form and return it to your directors, Ms. Blakey and Mr. Shen. Thank you so much for your willingness to participate in this important research to further the use of music for mental health and wellness!

Jess Walls
Auburn University

(NOTE: DO NOT SIGN THIS DOCUMENT UNLESS AN IRB APPROVAL STAMP WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN APPLIED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

INFORMED CONSENT/PARENT OR GUARDIAN PERMISSION OR CONSENT AND MINOR ASSENT

for a research study entitled

“How Can We Help? Wellbeing Interventions for Choral Music Ensembles.”

Your child is being invited to participate in a research study to determine if specific breathing and mindfulness techniques and specific emotion regulation techniques are useful in reducing anxiety and improving overall emotion regulation and wellbeing when integrated into choral music ensemble rehearsal practices. The study is being conducted by Jess Walls, PhD in Music Education student, under the direction of Jane Kuehne, Associate Professor of Music Education in the Auburn University Department of Curriculum and Teaching. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a middle school or high school choir student enrolled at a participating study site.

Why is this study being done? This study will help the researchers figure out if certain breathing techniques and ways to help regulate emotion using music are helpful to middle school and high school students. The researchers also want to know if students experiencing less anxiety and better emotion regulation makes musical performances better.

What will be involved if they participate? If you agree to allow your child to participate in this experimental mixed-method research study, first students will be given a survey to fill out with information about their emotions and both general and performance anxiety. Parents may request a preview copy of this survey if desired. The experimental measures in the choir classroom will be box breathing (a breathing relaxation technique based on psychological studies), walking through a mental exercise designed to help with performance anxiety that involves students internally considering worst/best/likely scenarios for an upcoming performance, and a technique where students internally connect choral music song lyrics to their own emotions. None of these techniques involve students sharing their personal experiences or medical information out loud. Parents may request an expected script for these measures if desired. Next, the initial survey with

a few additional questions will be repeated immediately after, and once again a week later. Finally, students can opt-in to participate in individual interviews regarding their experience at that week later follow-up, with parents invited to join via zoom or in person, or allow the choir director to join the interview in their place.

Are there any risks or discomforts? There is a risk of loss of confidentiality and emotional distress. The researcher will do their best to make sure your child is comfortable during the study. The probability of these risks occurring is minimal, and the potential magnitude of the risks is small. We will do our best to protect your data during storage and when they are shared by identifying students only by their choir folder number. However, there remains a possibility that someone could identify you. There is also the possibility that people who are not supposed to might access your data. In either case, we cannot reduce the risk to zero.

To minimize the risk of emotional distress, we will allow students to remove themselves from the study at any point if they experience emotional distress, and coordinate with the on-campus counseling staff to ensure professional care will be available to students if they experience distress. Additionally, the primary onsite researcher is trained and certified in Mental Health First Aid and can identify students who are potentially experiencing distress.

If participants need additional mental health support following the interventions, free confidential resources are available through the Texas Youth Helpline via text or chat at 1-800-989-6884. If a participant or their parent is in need of immediate crisis support, the national Suicide and Crisis line can be reached by calling or texting 988 at any time.

Are there benefits to your child or others? I cannot promise that this research will help your child, but we think that being involved in this research may help your child receive training in anxiety reduction and/or emotion regulation coping skills that can be used outside of the classroom. There is no promise that your child will receive any or all of the benefits described.

Are there any costs? There are no costs to participants.

If you change your mind about your child's participation, they can be withdrawn at any time during the study. Their participation is completely voluntary. If you or they choose to withdraw, their data can be withdrawn as long as it is identifiable. You or their decision about whether or not to participate or stop participating will not jeopardize your or their future relations with Auburn University, the College of Education, the Department of Music, or your school district.

Your child's privacy will be protected. Any information obtained in connection with the research and interview portions of this study will remain anonymous through the use of choir folder numbers as identifiers. The data collected will be protected by myself, the researcher, in online Box folders with 2-factor identification. Information obtained through their participation may be used for professional presentations and/or professional publication.

If you have any questions about this study, please ask the researcher now, or contact Jess Walls at jdww0169@auburn.edu. A copy of this document will be given to you to keep.

If you have questions about your child’s rights as a research participant, you may contact the Auburn University Office of Research Compliance by phone at 334-844-5966 or email them at irbadmin@auburn.edu or irbchair@auburn.edu.

Having read the information provided, you must decide whether or not you wish for the child named below to participate in this research study. Your signature documents your permission for the named child to take part in this research. A copy of this document will be given to you to keep.

Printed name of child

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

Printed Name Date

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

Printed Name Date

Optional Interview Consent:

If you and your child would be willing to participate in the optional interview after the intervention, please indicate your agreement with your initials here:

Yes, I would like my child to participate in the optional interview

Parent/Guardian Initials _____

Minor Participant Initials _____

Interviews may be recorded using video recording devices to assist with data collection. You have the right to refuse the video recording of your child. Please initial one of the following options:

_____ Yes, I give permission for the research team to collect video recordings of my child for research purposes only.

_____ No, I do not give permission for the research team to collect video recordings of my child for research purposes only.

Minor Assent:

If you have decided to take part in this study, please sign or print your name on the line below. You will be given a copy of this form.

Child’s Signature Date

Printed Name Date

To be completed by the researcher:

Signature of researcher Date

Printed Name Date

Hello XXXXX ISD Choir parents and guardians,

My name is Jess Walls, and I am a PhD student in music education at Auburn University. My previous experience includes teaching music at the elementary level, choir at the middle school and high school levels, and music appreciation at the college level.

Your wonderful choir director Ms. Jordon has graciously agreed to open her choir room for a few days to complete research for the first phase of my doctoral dissertation. For that research, I need a little help from you and your choral music students. I will give details about my research in the next paragraph and will be completely transparent along the way regarding what instructional techniques I am using in the Fort Settlement MS choir classroom. You and your students' participation is completely voluntary, with no penalties for choosing not to participate.

My research is generally about using music to support student wellbeing, with 3 specific techniques being introduced for this study. This research has been presented at music education conferences at both the state and national level.

- Technique 1: box breathing, a breathing technique that improves both choral singing and can be used outside of the classroom to assist with anxiety.
- Technique 2: “magnify”, I help students talk through potentially distressing performance anxiety situations to help the event feel less overwhelming and scary.

We look at:

- The worst that could happen
- The best that could happen
- The “most likely scenario”
- Technique 3: emotion regulation through choral music, designed to help them have a deeper emotional understanding of the music they are learning in choir to potentially reduce overall anxiety and increase musicality by:
 - Connecting it to specific emotional vocabulary
 - Internally connecting it to a situation where they personally have experienced this emotion
 - Singing through the song while picturing the event in which they experienced this emotion

Throughout all three techniques, students will be reminded that if the technique is causing them distress, they are welcome to step out, sit down, or request a pass to the counselor if they feel too highly distressed. I am personally certified in mental health first aid and will be keeping a conscious eye on all students to ensure that I am aware of any students who may need additional support.

Regarding data collection and confidentiality, student names will be kept completely confidential, being identified by their choir folder numbers on the pre- and post-surveys I give them to collect the data. I will also be asking for a few volunteers to complete a short interview with me after the interventions, which parents are invited to be present for either in person or via zoom. Interview participants will be given pseudonyms, and their interview data will be connected to their survey data using their folder number. All research activities have been reviewed and approved by Auburn University's Institutional Review Board, Fort Bend ISD, and

Fort Settlement campus administration, and follow all guidelines for ethical human subject research.

If you have any questions about any part of the study, please reach out as soon as possible to me via email at jdww0169@auburn.edu, and I will respond within 24-48 hours. If you approve of your student participating in this research study, please look over the attached parental consent/student assent document, and both you and your student sign the form and return it to your director, Ms. Jordon. Thank you so much for your willingness to participate in this important research to further the use of music for mental health and wellness!

Jess Walls
Auburn University

(NOTE: DO NOT SIGN THIS DOCUMENT UNLESS AN IRB APPROVAL STAMP WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN APPLIED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

INFORMED CONSENT/PARENT OR GUARDIAN PERMISSION OR CONSENT AND MINOR ASSENT

**for a research study entitled
“How Can We Help? Wellbeing Interventions for Choral Music Ensembles.”**

Your child is being invited to participate in a research study to determine if specific breathing and mindfulness techniques and specific emotion regulation techniques are useful in reducing anxiety and improving overall emotion regulation and wellbeing when integrated into choral music ensemble rehearsal practices. The study is being conducted by Jess Walls, PhD in Music Education student, under the direction of Jane Kuehne, Associate Professor of Music Education in the Auburn University Department of Curriculum and Teaching. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a middle school or high school choir student enrolled at a participating study site.

Why is this study being done? This study will help the researchers figure out if certain breathing techniques and ways to help regulate emotion using music are helpful to middle school and high school students. The researchers also want to know if students experiencing less anxiety and better emotion regulation makes musical performances better.

What will be involved if they participate? If you agree to allow your child to participate in this experimental mixed-method research study, first students will be given a survey to fill out with information about their emotions and both general and performance anxiety. Parents may request a preview copy of this survey if desired. The experimental measures in the choir classroom will be box breathing (a breathing relaxation technique based on psychological studies), walking through a mental exercise designed to help with performance anxiety that involves students internally considering worst/best/likely scenarios for an upcoming performance, and a technique where students internally connect choral music song lyrics to their own emotions. None of these techniques involve students sharing their personal experiences or medical information out loud. Parents may request an expected script for these measures if desired. Next, the initial survey with a few additional questions will be repeated immediately after, and once again a week later. Finally, students can opt-in to participate in individual interviews regarding their experience at

that week later follow-up, with parents invited to join via zoom or in person, or allow the choir director to join the interview in their place.

Are there any risks or discomforts? There is a risk of loss of confidentiality and emotional distress. The researcher will do their best to make sure your child is comfortable during the study. The probability of these risks occurring is minimal, and the potential magnitude of the risks is small. We will do our best to protect your data during storage and when they are shared by identifying students only by their choir folder number. However, there remains a possibility that someone could identify you. There is also the possibility that people who are not supposed to might access your data. In either case, we cannot reduce the risk to zero.

To minimize the risk of emotional distress, we will allow students to remove themselves from the study at any point if they experience emotional distress, and coordinate with the on-campus counseling staff to ensure professional care will be available to students if they experience distress. Additionally, the primary onsite researcher is trained and certified in Mental Health First Aid and can identify students who are potentially experiencing distress.

If participants need additional mental health support following the interventions, free confidential resources are available through the Texas Youth Helpline via text or chat at 1-800-989-6884. If a participant or their parent is in need of immediate crisis support, the national Suicide and Crisis line can be reached by calling or texting 988 at any time.

Are there benefits to your child or others? I cannot promise that this research will help your child, but we think that being involved in this research may help your child receive training in anxiety reduction and/or emotion regulation coping skills that can be used outside of the classroom. There is no promise that your child will receive any or all of the benefits described.

Are there any costs? There are no costs to participants.

If you change your mind about your child's participation, they can be withdrawn at any time during the study. Their participation is completely voluntary. If you or they choose to withdraw, their data can be withdrawn as long as it is identifiable. You or their decision about whether or not to participate or stop participating will not jeopardize your or their future relations with Auburn University, the College of Education, the Department of Music, or your school district.

Your child's privacy will be protected. Any information obtained in connection with the research and interview portions of this study will remain anonymous through the use of choir folder numbers as identifiers. The data collected will be protected by myself, the researcher, in online Box folders with 2-factor identification. Information obtained through their participation may be used for professional presentations and/or professional publication.

If you have any questions about this study, please ask the researcher now, or contact Jess Walls at jdww0169@auburn.edu. A copy of this document will be given to you to keep.

If you have questions about your child’s rights as a research participant, you may contact the Auburn University Office of Research Compliance by phone at 334-844-5966 or email them at irbadmin@auburn.edu or irbchair@auburn.edu.

Having read the information provided, you must decide whether or not you wish for the child named below to participate in this research study. Your signature documents your permission for the named child to take part in this research. A copy of this document will be given to you to keep.

Printed name of child

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

Printed Name Date

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

Printed Name Date

Optional Interview Consent:

If you and your child would be willing to participate in the optional interview after the intervention, please indicate your agreement with your initials here:

Yes, I would like my child to participate in the optional interview

Parent/Guardian Initials _____

Minor Participant Initials _____

Interviews may be recorded using video recording devices to assist with data collection. You have the right to refuse the video recording of your child. Please initial one of the following options:

_____ Yes, I give permission for the research team to collect video recordings of my child for research purposes only.

_____ No, I do not give permission for the research team to collect video recordings of my child for research purposes only.

Minor Assent:

If you have decided to take part in this study, please sign or print your name on the line below. You will be given a copy of this form.

Child’s Signature Date

Printed Name Date

To be completed by the researcher:

Signature of researcher Date

Printed Name Date

Appendix H - Information Letter and Consent/Assent for Control Sites

Hello XXXXX ISD Choir parents and guardians,

My name is Jess Walls, and I am a PhD student in music education at Auburn University. My previous experience includes teaching music at the elementary level, choir at the middle school and high school levels, and music appreciation at the college level.

Your wonderful choir directors Dr. Dean, Mr. Short, and Ms. Hinski have graciously agreed to open their choir room for me to complete research for the first phase of my doctoral dissertation. For that research, I need a little help from you and your choral music students. You and your students' participation is completely voluntary, with no penalties for choosing not to participate.

Your students at Dulles HS and Dulles MS are in the "control group", so the only thing they will need to do for my research is complete a short 10-15 minute survey that I will provide when I come to their classroom in January.

My research is generally about using music to support student wellbeing, and the survey will ask questions about their experience with anxiety and overall mood. Regarding data collection and confidentiality, student names will be kept completely confidential, being identified by their choir folder numbers on the survey to collect the data. All research activities have been reviewed and approved by Auburn University's Institutional Review Board, Fort Bend ISD, and Dulles campus administration, and follow all guidelines for ethical human subject research.

If you have any questions about any part of the study, please reach out as soon as possible to me via email at jdww0169@auburn.edu, and I will respond within 24-48 hours. If you approve of your student participating in this research study, please look over the attached parental consent/student assent document, and both you and your student sign the form and return it to your director, Dr. Dean or Mr. Short and Ms. Hinski. Thank you so much for your willingness to participate in this important research to further the use of music for mental health and wellness!

Jess Walls
Auburn University

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for a research study entitled

"How Can We Help? Wellbeing Interventions for Choral Music Ensembles."

Your child is being invited to participate in a research study to determine if specific breathing and mindfulness techniques and specific emotion regulation techniques are useful in reducing anxiety and improving overall emotion regulation and wellbeing when integrated into choral music ensemble rehearsal practices. The study is being conducted by Jess Walls, PhD in Music

Education student, under the direction of Jane Kuehne, Associate Professor of Music Education in the Auburn University Department of Curriculum and Teaching. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a middle school or high school choir student enrolled at a participating study site.

Why is this study being done? This study will help the researchers figure out if certain breathing techniques and ways to help regulate emotion using music are helpful to middle school and high school students. The researchers also want to know if students experiencing less anxiety and better emotion regulation makes musical performances better.

What will be involved if they participate? If you agree to allow your child to participate in this experimental mixed-method research study, students will be given a survey to fill out with information about their emotions and both general and performance anxiety. Parents may request a preview copy of this survey if desired. The experimental measures will take place on a different campus in Fort Bend ISD.

Are there any risks or discomforts? There is a risk of loss of confidentiality and emotional distress. The researcher will do their best to make sure your child is comfortable during the study. The probability of these risks occurring is minimal, and the potential magnitude of the risks is small. We will do our best to protect your data during storage and when they are shared by identifying students only by their choir folder number. However, there remains a possibility that someone could identify you. There is also the possibility that people who are not supposed to might access your data. In either case, we cannot reduce the risk to zero.

To minimize the risk of emotional distress, we will allow students to remove themselves from the study at any point if they experience emotional distress, and coordinate with the on-campus counseling staff to ensure professional care will be available to students if they experience distress. Additionally, the primary onsite researcher is trained and certified in Mental Health First Aid and can identify students who are potentially experiencing distress.

If participants need additional mental health support following the interventions, free confidential resources are available through the Texas Youth Helpline via text or chat at 1-800-989-6884. If a participant or their parent is in need of immediate crisis support, the national Suicide and Crisis line can be reached by calling or texting 988 at any time.

Are there benefits to your child or others? I cannot promise that this research will help your child, but we think that being involved in this research may help your child receive training in anxiety reduction and/or emotion regulation coping skills that can be used outside of the classroom. There is no promise that your child will receive any or all of the benefits described.

Are there any costs? There are no costs to participants.

If you change your mind about your child's participation, they can be withdrawn at any time during the study. Their participation is completely voluntary. If you or they choose to withdraw, their data can be withdrawn as long as it is identifiable. You or their decision about whether or

not to participate or stop participating will not jeopardize your or their future relations with Auburn University, the College of Education, the Department of Music, or your school district.

Your child’s privacy will be protected. Any information obtained in connection with the research and interview portions of this study will remain anonymous through the use of choir folder numbers as identifiers. The data collected will be protected by myself, the researcher, in online Box folders with 2-factor identification. Information obtained through their participation may be used for professional presentations and/or professional publication.

If you have any questions about this study, please ask the researcher now, or contact Jess Walls at jdww0169@auburn.edu. A copy of this document will be given to you to keep.

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Having read the information provided, you must decide whether or not you wish for the child named below to participate in this research study. Your signature documents your permission for the named child to take part in this research. A copy of this document will be given to you to keep.

Printed name of child

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

Printed Name Date

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

Printed Name Date

Minor Assent:

If you have decided to take part in this study, please sign or print your name on the line below. You will be given a copy of this form.

Child’s Signature Date

Printed Name Date

To be completed by the researcher:

Signature of researcher Date

Printed Name Date

Appendix I – Transcriptions of Interviews

High School Interviews:

John CK

JW: All right. Well, first of all, thank you so much for agreeing to do the interview. Let me pull up my interview questions. So, the questions are just kind of about the interventions we did, and the, the different things that...you know, about anxiety and things like that. So, uh, what... what was kind of your understanding of anxiety before we did any of this a week ago?

John: Just something that I don't really like. It kind of makes me worry about, especially schoolwork is a big one for me, uh, just slows me down in my life.

JW: Okay, so you have personally experienced anxiety before?

John: Yeah, yeah.

JW: Okay. So before this, had you ever used music or any kind of breathing technique to help you with your anxiety?

John: Never really tried a breathing technique. I did use... use it sometimes, but it wasn't very common for me.

JW: Okay. What are some other things you've used to help with your anxiety?

John: Uh...I really like playing video games and watching TV for me. That helps me. Uh, sleep is a big one, too. Uh, yeah.

JW: Yeah, awesome. Do you find those to be pretty helpful most of the time?

John: Usually, yeah. Sometimes if I'm really sad, won't, but that's very rare for me.

JW: Yeah, that makes sense. So since...the intervention we did a week ago. Have you tried using the box breathing technique?

John: I've tried it a few times at home. I think it helped me, but I wasn't really, like, extremely sad or anything, so I don't know how it would translate.

JW: Okay, that's... that's still helpful to know. Uh, so the other technique, or the second technique we used, the one where we talked through the performance anxiety, have you tried using that one in your life?

John: No.

JW: No.

John: No, I haven't tried that one.

JW: Do you think that when you have your next performance, you may feel less anxiety about the performance if you use that, when you get to that performance?

John: I would say so, yeah. Yeah that would work.

JW: Is there anything specific about those two interventions that you found especially helpful?

John: I don't think anything I can... pull up specifically, no.

JW: Okay. Do you think those could be helpful to other students in other choirs?

John: Like, across...

JW: Like, across anywhere, yeah.

John: Okay. Uh...yeah, I would say... I'll go out and say most people, yeah.

JW: You think that would be helpful to most people? Any particular reasons why you think they would be helpful?

John: Uh, I think a lot of kids are stressed, and...you know, choir kids especially, they usually have a lot going on.

JW: Is there anything you want me or just other people, choir directors in general, to know about anxiety that you're not sure that adults really get about what kids experience?

John: Sorry, you have to give me a second.

JW: Okay, yeah, that's a big question.

John: You, you, sorry, can you repeat the question again?

JW: So, is there anything you can think of that...about how kids experience anxiety that the adults in your life may not be very aware of.

John: I guess I could go with social media. That's a big factor. Really plays down and rough on your self-esteem.

JW: Yeah, that is a big one. Anything else about music and anxiety you want to add?

John: I think music really helps me with my anxiety, I think it helps a lot of people. Personally, I don't listen to a lot of choir music, but I know it helps a lot of people.

JW: And, I mean, I'm just talking about music in general, it doesn't have to be choir music.

John: So, yeah, yeah, then yes, I think music helps a lot of people with anxiety.

JW: Awesome. So...alright, switching over to the part about the emotions. What was your understanding of emotion, just in general? Before we did any of this.

John: Understanding emotion was...something that passes and goes? I guess, across the day, across life.

JW: Do you think certain emotions can be classified as good or bad?

John: Not emotions themselves, I wouldn't really classify them as good and bad. Maybe actions, but not emotions.

JW: Okay, that makes sense. So since we did the intervention a week ago where we talked through connecting your own emotions to the song, has the way you thought about emotion changed at all?

John: Can you explain a little further?

JW: Like, has that changed, kind of, the way you relate to your own emotions?

John: I think it...it's helped me see, or explain a lot more of what I feel. I think that it's helped me in that area.

JW: Awesome. So, when you were thinking about your own emotional experience while we were, uh, reading the music, and while you've been singing the music since then, did you find it easy to connect your own life to the music?

John: Um, I found it easier, but I still can't fully...I can't fully understand it.

JW: Okay, that is fair. So since we did that a week ago, have you found yourself...when you're listening to music or singing music just in your regular life, have you found yourself thinking about how the songs connect to your own life and the emotions you feel in your life?

John: When I'm listening to music, I think that...I do...feel that it connects to me, but I only feel that with some music...types of music.

JW: That's cool. Is there anything about what we did with the emotion connection that you found really helpful? And if so, what was it?

John: Sorry, can you repeat the question?

JW: Yeah, absolutely. So, did you find anything especially helpful about connecting your own emotional experience to the music?

John: Uh, yeah, I think that it helps you understand more of what you're feeling and relaxes you more.

JW: Okay. Did you find it stressful or uncomfortable to do that one?

John: To connect to the music?

JW: Mm-hmm.

John: Not really. I found it pretty passing (word unclear here, possibly passing or relaxing, timestamp 7:56ish), actually.

JW: And this is kind of the same as that anxiety question I asked earlier. Is there anything you want the adults in your life to know about emotions. And how kids experience emotions that you're not sure we're always aware of.

John: Uh...they can change very quickly. I can go from sad to angry, or happy to sad. Or something like that, very quickly changes throughout the day and throughout the week.

JW: Awesome. Feel that. Anything else...related to music and emotion, or anything that we did in the class that you...thought was important.

John: Um...I guess, understanding what you're feeling. I think that's very important, probably the most important for me, at least.

JW: What's...Really, really helpful. Alright, and that's the last question I have for you. Did you want to add anything else, or...Awesome, thank you so, so much. Really appreciate you.

John: Thank you.

JW: You're welcome.

Gavin GG

JW: So, what we're gonna do, I just have a few questions, it shouldn't take super, super long, probably just about as long as his just took. Uh, it's gonna be kind of stuff about anxiety, about emotions, just about the stuff we did last week, that sort of thing. So... First question, what was your understanding of anxiety before we did any of this?

Gavin: I mean, like, I knew, like, what it felt like, like, as... like, what it would do between your body, it would make you sweat. So, like, I understood the feeling of it. There's not a lot of, like, things I knew, like, how to fix it.

JW: Okay. Had you personally experienced anxiety before?

Gavin: I think a couple times, but it's mostly when I'm just about to do something in front of a lot of people.

JW: Fair. Had you ever tried anything like using music or any kind of breathing technique to help with your anxiety before this?

Gavin: Breathing technique is, like, one of the gradings (greetings?), usually, in band especially, like, we breathe in 4 and out 4, just like anything of stress. (This line was tricky to transcribe, I got the gist of it in person but re-listening I'm not 100% certain what the exact wording was)

JW: So you had used that before because of learning it in band?

Gavin: I mean...kind of.

JW: Kind of. Okay. What are some other things you've done to help reduce your anxiety before this?

Gavin: I don't think much else, because...I mean, when I got anxiety, I just kind of got through it, like, I didn't know all, like, ways to...get through it.

JW: Okay, that makes sense. So since... I was here a week ago. Have you tried using the box breathing technique?

Gavin: There's not...there hasn't been a lot of, like, situations, like, in the week so far, so I haven't used it.

JW: Ok. Uh. Okay, so moving on to the second thing we did with the performance anxiety, have you tried using that technique at all? Since we... the one where we thought about, like, the worst case scenario, best case scenario.

Gavin: I think I usually do that, like, I do that a lot, whenever I want to do something, like, what's the worst possible thing that could happen? But, like, as well as, like...so I think I've used that a couple times.

JW: Okay. Did you find it helpful? Did you feel like it reduced your anxiety to kind of connect it to the reality?

Gavin: I think it did.

JW: Do you think that when you have another performance, you'll feel less anxiety if you do that?

Gavin: Yeah, I think so.

JW: Is there anything about those two parts of the intervention that you found especially helpful?

Gavin: I think the scenario one is, like, more helpful than the breathing for me. Because, like, I breathe a lot, like, obviously because I'm in band and choir, so, like, it's already something I'm used to, but the scenario is, like, something new for me to try. I think it affects even more than the other one.

JW: Do you think that...these interventions could be helpful to students in other choirs, if choir directors knew how to teach them.

Gavin: I think it could, yeah.

JW: Is there...and, alright, so this is kind of a complicated question, and it might take a minute to kind of think about. So, is there anything that...kids and teens go through with anxiety that you're not sure the adults in your life are always aware of.

pause

Gavin: I think, like, a lot of students, like, get anxiety and stressed out, and they have, like, a lot of schoolwork to do, and parents don't really, like, think about that, and they're, like, asking their children to do a lot of things and expecting them to, like, do their best, but they could be, like, stressed from other, like, a lot of schoolwork. That they don't really know about, because, you know, school's changed since...then, so...

JW: That makes sense, yes. And as a teacher, yes, it definitely has changed, even the last few years. Is there anything else you wanted to share about music and anxiety that you think is important?

Gavin: Um...I think that, like, anxiety, like, even if you have anxiety when going on stage, usually when you start singing, you can, like, already help you, because, like, over time, you, like, realize, like, who you're in front of. Like, you're in front of people who are here for a reason, because they enjoy listening to you, so...

Other teacher, off screen: I'll take the letters (I don't remember what she was talking about here, I think she grabbed something off the desk next to me)

JW: Alright, so now talking about the very last thing we did, the one where we talked about connecting your emotion to the music. What was kind of your understanding of emotion, just in general, before we did any of this?

Gavin: I mean, I just thought it as, like, something that would come up every once in a while, like. if a situation happened, it would, like, make me feel the emotion, but most of the time, I feel like I'm pretty monotone, so...

JW: Okay. Do you feel like certain emotions are good emotions and bad emotions?

Gavin: I mean, I feel like some are, like...more helpful than others, like, happiness, obviously, is, like it makes you feel better about yourself, but other things like sadness, eats at you, you know. Self-doubt, or, like, just anything really like that.

JW: So since we did that emotion connection thing a week ago, has the way you think about emotion changed at all?

Gavin: I mean, I think it's still pretty similar of the thoughts I thought before.

JW: Okay. Alright, so whenever we did that exercise of connecting your own experience to the music that you're actually singing, uh what, what was that like for you? Did you find it pretty easy to connect your own experience to the music?

Gavin: I think it was difficult. Because, like, music can really be about anything when you look into it, and there's not, like, a lot of things that happen that could be similar to it, but eventually, like, you can find it.

JW: So since we did that, have you noticed yourself, when you're listening to your own music, or singing music, or anything like that, have you noticed yourself thinking about how the emotions in the song connect to your own life?

Gavin: Yeah, actually, a couple times. Mostly when I'm listening to, like, my music that I like to listen to. Sometimes I can, like. Hear the lyrics and, like, think about stuff that kind of relates to myself.

JW: Okay. Is there anything about that intervention that you found especially helpful? The emotion connection one.

Gavin: I think it's helpful. Because it helps you, like, connect your emotions without actually having to, like, say them out loud, because it's a song. Like, it's not...you're not truly, like, telling them what you're feeling, but at the same time, you are, so I think it can be helpful.

JW: Awesome. Was there any part of learning that technique that you found just kind of stressful or uncomfortable?

Gavin: I think just the connection in general, when it's like. Certain pieces, like, if it's in another language, or like...Some things like that can help, I mean, make it harder, to connect yourself with it.

JW: Okay. Did you feel like it was still worth it, even if it was a little difficult?

Gavin: I think it was so, yeah.

JW: So... Alright, is there anything you want...the adults in your life to know about...How kids experience emotions that might be different than how adults...

Gavin: I feel like adults should just, like, realize that children are, like, most high schoolers are, like, going through, you know, like, certain phases, and, like, it can cause them to have, like, more... feel more emotion towards certain... certain things, and feel less towards others. So I feel like they should just take that into account sometimes.

JW: Okay. Is there anything else you wanted to share about just music and emotion in general that you feel like is important?

Gavin: I think that's it.

JW: Awesome, thank you, that was my last question. I really appreciate you.

Hunter EC

Hunter: Alright, so I am just gonna ask you a few questions about anxiety, about emotions, and about the stuff that we did a week ago when I was here. So, first question, what was your understanding of anxiety before everything we did a week ago?

Hunter: Well...my understanding was, anxiety was like...well, I can't really put into words, but...really an emotion you can feel.

JW: Okay.

Hunter: Kind of hard to explain.

JW: Have you experienced anxiety before?

Hunter: Oh, yeah, definitely.

JW: Okay, describe a little bit of what that feels like for you.

Hunter: Um, well, usually my palms are right now they're sweaty. And, kind of shaky. I think my voice gets a little higher.

JW: Okay. Sounds like a pretty common experience for experienced anxiety. So, before this, had you ever used any music or any kind of breathing technique to help with your anxiety?

Hunter: Um, not really.

JW: What are some other things you have used to help with your anxiety?

Hunter: Umm...I don't think I did use one.

JW: Okay, so just didn't really know what to do, so you just kind of dealt with it?

Hunter: Yeah, pretty much.

JW: Alright. So since I was here a week ago, have you tried using the box breathing technique? The breathe in for 4, hold for 4, out for 4?

Hunter: Oh, I kind of...it kind of slipped past my mind.

JW: That's alright! Alright, so, so you haven't really tried it yet?

Hunter: I mean, I did it a few times after... after this period.

JW: Okay, did you find it helpful?

Hunter: I mean, usually I just hold my breath until my lungs expand.

JW: Alright. So, what about the other one, the second one we did, where we talked about the worst case scenario, and the best-case scenario, and the realistic scenario? Uh, since I was here, have you tried doing that in your daily life? Just...

Hunter: I don't know if I heard that one.

JW: Okay, so that one was the one where I was talking about, like, your next performance coming up,

Hunter: Ohhhh! Yeah, yeah.

JW: ...and the worst it could go, and then the best it could go. Do you think that you could possibly feel less anxiety at your next performance if you do that?

Hunter: Definitely. Um, I actually performed a solo song, my last concert.

JW: Oh, awesome.

Hunter: I think it was the concert before that, somewhere there.

JW: So, do you think that before your next... like, if you have a solo at one of the next concerts, do you think you would find it helpful to kind of think through what's realistically gonna happen in the performance?

Hunter: Yeah.

JW: Do you think that those two things, the breathing and the thinking through best and worst case, do you think those could be helpful to other students in other choirs,

Hunter: Oh yeah.

JW: ...if their directors knew how to do it?

Hunter: For sure.

JW: Alright, this one's kind of a complicated question. Is there anything that... about anxiety that you feel like the adults in your life might not always be aware of? Like, the anxiety that kids experience that adults might not know about.

Hunter: I mean, I feel like some people, maybe? But...in general, I think it's a...I think it's all the same.

JW: Okay. Anything else you want to share about music and anxiety that you think is important?

Hunter: Ummm...not really.

JW: Alright. Moving on to the very last thing, which was where we connected our emotions and our own experiences to the music.

Hunter: Hmm.

JW: What kind of was your understanding of emotion before we did all of that? Just emotion in general?

Hunter: Emotion, they're the expressions that we... that we use daily. They...literally can't be used one day, but, like, without... can't be used once, but... crap, they can't...you can't go without a day using them.

JW: Okay, there we go. Okay, now I get what you're saying. So do you think certain emotions are good, or bad, or...

Hunter: All emotions are okay, because it's okay to feel emotions. If you're angry, if you're angry because of a reason. If you're sad, you feel...feel something in your heart. Boop, boop. It's all that.

JW: Yeah. Alright, so since...we did that intervention connecting your emotions to a song. Has the way you thought about emotion changed at all?

Hunter: Not really. I've had a pretty good...ever since 7th grade, I've had a pretty good understanding of emotions.

JW: Okay, good. So, whenever we were doing that and connecting your experience to the music, what was that like for you? Did you find it easy? Did you find it kind of difficult?

Hunter: Connecting with music, I mean...I connect with some music sometimes, in, like, small ways.

JW: Was it easy to find an experience that connected when we were in class?

Hunter: Umm...I forgot what that, question before was.

JW: Oh, okay. Well, just whenever we were connecting your emotional experience to the song in class, were you able to kind of figure that out? While we were in class.

Hunter: Hmm. Ummm. Connect with the songs that we have in class. I don't really connect to those songs.

JW: That is entirely fine. How about your own music? So, since we did that, have you found yourself, when you're listening to your own music, or singing any music in general, have you found yourself thinking more about the emotions in the song, and the way they connect to your life?

Hunter: Oh, yeah. *pause* With every song, there's a purpose. People sing with a purpose, emotion, or stuff like that. So, songs that I listen to definitely have a lot of emotion in them.

JW: Awesome. And you feel like you really connect with the emotions in those songs?

Hunter: Some of them, yeah.

JW: Was there anything about doing that connection to the emotions that you found really helpful?

Hunter: Not really.

JW: Okay. Was there any part of it you found kind of stressful or uncomfortable?

Hunter: I mean, I kind of listen to some fast-paced music, so...

JW: Okay.

Hunter: Some points it can feel stressful when it's not...

JW: Just like the speed of it can make it feel a little stressful?

Hunter: Yeah, sometimes a little instrumentals, too. It's like a horror movie.

JW: Oh, yeah, I mean, stressful music is automatically gonna stress you out, that makes sense.

Hunter: Yeah.

JW: Is there anything else you want the adults in your life to know about how kids experience emotions.

Hunter: Ooh that one's kind of tough for me, because...It's a lot of... it's a lot of diversity, so... I don't know how everybody's gonna feel.

JW: That's fair. Anything else you want to share about music and emotion that you think is important?

Hunter: Yeah, not really.

JW: Alright. Awesome, thank you so much. That was my last question.

Amar AD

JW: So, I'm just going to ask a few questions about anxiety, about the things that we did in class a week ago, and emotions. So, just...kind of some general questions that'll make you think, but not...none of it should be too difficult. So, first question, what was...let me double check that I recorded, yes, okay. What was your understanding of anxiety before I came in a week ago?

Amar: Um, my understanding of anxiety is, like, stress, feeling like...like, you're unprepared, you're...you're anxious, you're, like, nervous to do something.

JW: Have you personally experienced anxiety before, and what was that like?

Amar: Well, I have experienced it a few times on, like, previous tests, so that's, like, first semester. Just because I didn't study is, like, stressful, because some of the information, if you don't study, then it'll be kind of, like, brand new to you, and you won't really know what to do for it.

JW: Okay, so your biggest experience of anxiety is just being unprepared,

Amar: Yeah.

JW: ...entirely fair. So, when you experienced anxiety, have you ever tried using music, or any kind of breathing technique, or anything like that to help?

Amar: Normally when I'm anxious. Well, I mean, when I'm at home, like, doing homework, because I normally get a lot, I normally just listen to music, or just, like, sing, because it normally helps me cool off, calm down. Or whenever I'm taking a test or a quiz at school, I can't listen to music, so I just think of a song in my head, and think of the lyrics while I'm taking the exam, it helps me focus more and get better grades.

JW: Awesome. Are there any other techniques you've used to help with your anxiety?

Amar: I mean, I've used some breathing techniques, like, for example, box breathing, which we've done, like, last week.

JW: Mmhmm.

Amar: I started using that again. The last time I used it before was, like, 7th grade. Um, I started using it, and it's really shown that it's, like, helping me improve. Like, not just in school, but, like, at work, out of school.

JW: That's awesome. I...that was actually going to be my next question since I came, have you used box breathing? So you just answered that perfectly. Awesome. Okay, so then the second thing that we did, which was the...think about worst case scenario, best-case scenario for a performance. Since I came last week, have you used that in your daily life, thinking about worst case, best case, realistic scenario?

Amar: Uh...

JW: So when we thought about, like, okay, in a performance, what's the worst that could possibly happen? And then, how's the best it could possibly go? And then...what's actually realistic. Have you used that in your life since?

Amar: I've used that, at work a few times. Like, what's the worst case, what's the best case? Because I've had to work... like, I had to replace some of our rep, representatives, so I had to... so I was thinking, like, if I was sick, then I couldn't show up, then I'll have less sales. But if I still show up, then we'll still have, like, more so, we'll still be on track with our sales.

JW: Awesome. Do you think that when you have your next performance. That you'll be less anxious if you use that technique.

Amar: I feel like, yeah, if I use that, but also box breathing, they both, like, work together in a way. Like, thinking of worst and best case scenarios, like, if we practice more, like, not only, uh in the choir room, but also at home. Like, it will be, like, a better... better fit for our next contest, or our next performance. And then, if we don't, then we'll be, like, if we don't practice at home, I feel like we're still gonna be missing a few things, so we're not gonna get that high of a score as we would want.

JW: Okay. Makes sense. So, is there anything about those two interventions for anxiety that you found especially helpful?

Amar: Um. I mean, they're both really helpful in their own way, they both do their own thing. Box breathing can help, like help you concentrate, help you calm down when you're, like, expressing, like, too much of a deep emotion, like sadness, for example. Worst best case scenario could be, like, if you're prepping for, like, a major grade, like if you have homework, or you can study, if you can only do one thing, like, what I would do, I would try to multitask them, but, like, if I can't, really, I'd just try to get as much of my work done in class, or in school, or, like, on the bus, so then I'll have not that much at home to do, so then I can just study, and I'll be ready for the test.

JW: Awesome. Uh, do you think that learning these anxiety interventions in a choir could be helpful to other students in other choirs, if their directors knew how to do it?

Amar: I feel like it could, the best-case scenarios, then they're... then the students would actually... probably they'd practice more at home, then they would have better outcomes for our performances. And then box breathing, for example, could also help with, like, concentration. Like, as I said before, it could help them really focus and, like, get prepared.

JW: Okay, awesome. Alright, this one's a little bit more complicated of a question, and you may need a second to think about it. Is there anything that you want the adults in your life to know about anxiety? Like, what students experience with anxiety that you think they might not already know?

pause

Amar: I mean, I feel like sometimes when I'm trying to study or stuff, like, my parents always, like, barge in. Like, I feel like they should at least, like, give me some leniency, like, let me, like, focus on studying, or, like, doing my work. I mean, teachers are great, they always help out. But like... *pause* I feel like teachers are already trying their best to help their students. I feel like parents should, like, also understand that their students are, like, trying their best. And I feel like, instead of, like, trying to discipline their children, I feel like the parents should, like, help them out. And, like...it should be, like, a separate tutor, for example, like, help them grow.

JW: Oh, okay, so just, like, be supportive instead of...that makes sense. Is there anything else about music and anxiety that you think is important?

Amar: I mean, the two things, they contrast, but they also compare. Music, uh it can help deal with anxiety, but, depends, because on... because some songs, depending on what genre you like or you don't like, some could cause more anxiety, some could...some will help benefit, like, scores, for example. Some will help you get a high score, some won't really help at all, so they'll just give you a neutral score.

JW: Okay. Now, switching over to the very last thing we did, which was the, emotion and song lyrics one, where we talked about your experiences connecting it to the songs. What was kind of your understanding of emotion in general before we did all of this?

Amar: Emotion in general, it's, like, how you feel, like, you can feel very deeply sad about something, or you can feel just, like, a tad bit upset. Like, it really depends on the situation.

JW: Do you feel like certain emotions are good or bad? Would you classify them that?

Amar: Emotions can't necessarily be bad, like, it's how you feel, but, like, it's how you deal with the emotions that really matters.

JW: That's a great answer. So since we did this technique a week ago, connecting the music to...your own experiences. Has the way you thought about emotion changed at all?

Amar: Well, I mean, I feel like it still remains mainly the same. Like, it's not really about...if they're good or bad emotions, like, emotions all matter in a way, but, like, it's... it's like I said earlier, it's about how you deal with the emotions rather than what emotions you're feeling. Like, if you feel guilty about how you felt then, like, you shouldn't really feel guilty about it, because that's how you're expressing yourself. You should figure out how to, like, deal with it, how...like, if you need help, you can ask others. If you think you can do it, I feel like you should still ask others to help you, like, unless they're, like...well, it really depends. Like, normally, if I'm... if I need help, for example, like, I'm deeply upset about something, I normally...either I go to my parents, because, like, they're adults that I know really well, or I go for my, my close friends, because people that are around your age group, they would, like, know more about you.

JW: Alright, so when we were connecting your emotional experience to the music. What was that like for you? Did you find it easy? Did you find it kind of difficult? How was that?

Amar: I mean, it was kind of difficult, because, like, the pieces, they're all, like, different in their own way, so, like...how you feel about them, it varies per person, but, like, for me, I mean, I feel like the first one that...the...one of the pieces that we're doing, the first one, called Speak the Truth, I feel like that one connects with me more, because, like, the other one's, like, more fast, it's not, like, my vibe, like, the...this one's, like, more about, like, heavenly, God related. I've sung a bunch of, like, those kinds of songs before, so, like, I just feel closer with those.

JW: That makes sense. So since we did that one week ago, have you found yourself, when you're listening to music or singing music just in general, have you found yourself thinking about your emotions and connecting your own life to the songs that you listen to?

Amar: I mean, I've tried to, I've done it before, with some previous songs in, middle school, when I was in, like, not in the school choir, but, like, an out-of-school choir, some songs that I've connected to, like...how do I explain it? They're, like, about stress and how you manage it, really. And then these songs now, they're, like, they're more different, there's a bigger variety between the songs, which, like, makes me feel like different things between each song.

JW: Mmhmm. Is there anything about what we did connecting your experience to the song that you found especially helpful?

Amar: I mean, once I was, like, able to, like, relate how the song relates to myself, like, I can understand, like, what they're trying to say in the song better, it's like, I can understand the flow, I can understand what's going on through the song.

JW: Was there any part of that that you found stressful or uncomfortable when you were connecting your own experience?

Amar: I mean, it wasn't really stressful or uncomfortable, it's, like, how you... how you express yourself through the song. Like, you can express yourself through music. Each song is, like, can be a different part of you, like, one could be, like, a good side of you, one could be a bad side, but, like. No songs are really bad, it's just, like. How they're displayed, and how it relates to you.

JW: Is there anything you want the adults in your life to know about how kids your age experience emotions.

Amar: I mean, I feel like some adults, they wouldn't really understand, kind of, how, like, our perspective. So that's why when I'm...I always need... when I need help for, like, songs, I normally just ask, like, some of my friends for advice, because, like, people who are, like, normally around your age group, they would understand you better, because they've most likely been in a similar scenario before.

JW: Makes sense. Alright, is there anything else that you think is important to share about music and emotion?

Amar: I mean, like I've said before, those two, they're, like, two separate worlds, but they can also be conjoined, music and, um, music and emotions, like, music...how do I explain that? Emotions are basically how you feel, and music can represent those emotions by, like, what type of music they are, how fast or slow they are, um, what genre of music there are. There's, like, multiple ways that, that music can explain your emotions.

JW: Awesome. Really good answers. Thank you so much. That was my last question. I appreciate you.

Kenny MM (English Language Learner, some of this interview was tricky to transcribe as he could be difficult to understand at times)

JW: Just do your best.

Kenny: Awesome, I will do as best as I can.

JW: Yes, absolutely. Alright, so, what...what did you understand about anxiety before I came last week?

Kenny: Anxiety...it's like...I mean, I practicing (hard to hear but I think that makes the most sense in context). You know, I have to have the piano competition this week on Saturday, and I have practice a lot, because I mean, I'm now scared of it, so I have anxiety

JW: Oh, so you're stressed out.

Kenny: Yeah, stressed out of it, yeah.

JW: Yeah.

Kenny: Exactly.

JW: Have you ever used music or breathing to help with your anxiety before?

Kenny: Yeah, sometimes I'm listening to rock music.

JW: Listening to rock music?

Kenny: Yeah, like the rock Queen, like jamming (I think that's what he tried to say but unsure).

JW: I, I love Queen. Did...does listening to music help with your anxiety?

Kenny: Oh, yeah, exactly.

JW: Okay.

Kenny: And maybe is fun, like.

JW: Yeah. Yeah, awesome. Have you ever used anything else to help with your anxiety?

Kenny: yeah... I mean, sometimes I play the game. I play the, like, Roblox, play the ball stuff.

JW: Oh, like computer games.

Kenny: Yeah, computer game.

JW: Do those help?

Kenny: Yeah, exactly.

JW: Since I came last week. Have you used the box breathing, the in for 4, hold for 4, out for 4? Have you tried it?

Kenny: Oh, yeah, I've tried it before.

JW: Did you find it helpful?

Kenny: Yeah, sometimes it help.

JW: A little bit.

Kenny: Yeah, a little bit. Doing a choir performance.

JW: Oh, like, during the choir performance?

Kenny: Yeah.

JW: Awesome. Alright, so what about the other one we did, where you are thinking about the performance. The worst it could go, and the best it could go. Did you find that helpful when we did it?

Kenny: Yes, of course.

JW: Okay. Have you tried using that in your life since I was here?

Kenny: For the BD? (I'm not sure what he said here, but it was clearly a question asking for clarification so that's what I did)

JW: Like, have you thought about worst case and best case for other things in your life? Or just for performances so far.

Kenny: Oh, no, this is fine, but I've seen for performers. Okay. What scene for me, like, I must have the test. I... divided in the conversation of the run. I mean, the track, sure. (As close as I could get but may have missed some of what was meant here, I think something possibly about using it when running track).

JW: Okay.

Kenny: Yeah.

JW: Do you think that using that will help you be less anxious about your next performance and less stressed?

Kenny: Yes, so now I use that.

JW: Okay. What did you find really helpful about the box breathing or the best case, worst case?

Kenny: So, the box breathing, it kind of...I'll give me the least stress for them performance For the competition, like, for the running.

JW: Okay. Yeah. Do you think that doing these things could help other choir students in other choirs?

Kenny: Yeah. I think so.

JW: That's good. Is there anything you want...the adults in your life to know about anxiety, about anxiety that kids experience. Kids your age.

Kenny: Yeah, I don't know the family condition, about the anxiety, like, to have some fun activity in the whole so, doing bad. Yeah.

JW: So, you want parents to know that kids are experiencing anxiety.

Kenny: Oh, anxiety, yeah. I mean, they live in a full place, like, all anxiety, you know, they got a fight, and they got a gunshot, yeah.

JW: Alright, alright, thinking about the last part I did, the, emotions connecting your experience to the song. I know that's probably a little trickier for you, since the song is in English, and...

Kenny: Yeah, it's a lot of English.

JW: ...still learning. So...what was...what did you know about emotions in general, before I came in? So what was your understanding of emotions?

Kenny 5:23: For my opinion, it act, the emotion, it acts, you're feeling... Right now. It act sometimes bad emotion like, (unclear) I mess up the test or some of the...yeah

JW: Okay. Do you think some emotions are good and some are bad?

Kenny: Yeah, always have bad over the emotional impact.

JW: So since I came last time. Did that change how you think about emotions at all?

Kenny: Yes.

JW: It did?

Kenny: Yeah.

JW: How did it change it?

Kenny: It made me feel better, it like...thought I originally felt, depressed, you know a girl block me on the Instagram, and see, you can talk to me a lot, but...that seems like me, and I feel shy, like, you coming here. I mean, give me, like, a new way to control my emotion, like, try to feel better about it.

JW: Awesome, that is really, really good. So when we were connecting your experience to the music. What was that like for you? Did you... were you able to think of an experience that connected to the music?

Kenny: Exactly. Like the (unclear, oz most tick?) music, and the sad music. Sometimes I be listen to the beatles.

JW: Oh, you listen to the Beatles? I love the Beatles.

Kenny: Yeah, Paul McCartney, and, they got, like, great music.

JW: Alright. So, since I was here. When you're listening to music on your own. Do you find yourself connecting your emotions to the music you're listening to?

Kenny: Exactly. Sounds like...

JW: So, all the time?

Kenny: Yeah, really my emotion.

JW: Good! Did you find learning to do that helpful, connecting your experience to the emotions? Do you find it helpful?

Kenny: Yes. After the listening to my music, I would feel better in 2 hours later.

JW: Great. Did you find it stressful at all to do? Or just mostly helpful.

Kenny: Helpful, mostly helpful, I think.

JW: Is there anything you want the adults in your life to know about emotions, about how kids your age experience emotions?

Kenny: Uh...no, no I don't think so.

JW: No, okay. Alright, anything else about music and emotion you think is important?

Kenny: That, the different type music you're listening. Can be... can rule your emotion. If you listen to rock music, you feel better. I mean, you listen to sad rock music, you feel sadder. That was bad wording, sorry.

JW: That makes sense. Alright, that was my last question. Thank you so much, I appreciate you.

Kenny: That's good.

JW: Yeah. No, that was great. Awesome. Thank you.

Kenny: (unclear, asking about what to do when he leaves)

JW: Yeah, I think... yes.

Brian KW

JW: And all I'm gonna ask today is just some questions about anxiety, about emotion, and about all the stuff we did last week when I was here. So, first question, what was your understanding of anxiety before I came a week ago?

Brian: I just, I think, like, how I feel about it.

JW: Like, just anything about anxiety. What do you know about it?

Brian: Well, I know that anxiety, like, it's like a feeling of nervousness that's, like, really, like, you can really feel it, sometimes it can cause panic attacks, but personally...panic attacks, so personally, I don't... I don't really get anxiety from choir. Matter of fact, I believe it helps me if I do have anxiety, but I can't really spot if I have anxiety that easily.

JW: Okay, so you may or may not have experienced anxiety before, you're not really sure?

Brian: Yeah.

JW: That's okay. That is totally fair. Have you ever, in the past, used music or any kind of breathing technique when you did feel a little bit stressed out?

Brian: That's for sure, like...sometimes while I, put a earbud on, you know just to listen to some music for a little bit. Helps a lot.

JW: Awesome.

Brian: Or sometimes play the... I know a little bit of piano, just tends to add a little bit, but sometimes play piano.

JW: Okay. Are there any other things you can think of you've used to help you when you're stressed out, to just relax a little?

Brian: Mostly, it's just games. Respect... playing some games

JW: Games, that seems to be a popular answer, I get it. Alright, does that help quite a bit with your anxiety?

Brian: Most of the games. Sometimes it's caused by the game, but most of the games actually help.

JW: As someone with a teenage son, agreed. *laughs* So since I was here a week ago, how have you used...have you used the box breathing that I taught y'all, the in for 4, hold for 4, out for 4, hold for 4?

Brian: I believe I haven't used that, and when we finish here to update this, because I was... because of laptop issues.

JW: That's right, you were having the laptop issues. So, basically what you do is just choir breathing, and you breathe in for 4, hold for 4, out for 4, hold for 4, and just doing it in that pattern, and thinking about releasing your anxiety with the exhale can help just release some of that stress. So think about trying that.

Brian: Ok.

JW: So, what about the second one I did, which you were done with your...survey by. So since I was here, have you tried the, um, where we said, worst case scenario, best case scenario, that one.

Brian: Worst case scenario best case scenario?

JW: Have you tried that in just other things in your life besides performances?

Brian: I believe I do remember it, but I don't think I have tried it.

JW: Okay. Do you... did you find it helpful when we were talking through that in class about your next performance, thinking about how it could go really badly, how it could go really well, and what's realistic.

Brian: I mean, yeah, that was the thing about me, like, cuz...one time during a concert, well, I mean, it wasn't...I wasn't that good in the part, so I didn't really sing that loud, but I did mess up a little bit, but it wasn't that loud, so no one heard it. But I get... I see the bad possibility, no possibilities. I have been singing about that for the future, like, UIL, Pre-UIL, you know.

JW: You think it'll be helpful to have less anxiety at the next performance if you use that?

Brian: Yeah, for sure.

JW: Awesome. Was there anything about either one of those, either the box breathing or the...good scenario, bad scenario, that you found really helpful.

Brian: I'd say the good scenario, best scenario is probably more helpful, since I didn't really test out the box breathing, because you can probably, like... you can see your bad scenario, good scenario, you probably strengthen the possibility of the good scenario compared to the bad scenario.

JW: Yeah, just kind of, like, preparing for it. That makes sense. Do you think that learning those interventions for anxiety could be helpful to people in other choirs, if their directors knew how to do it?

Brian: I mean, yeah, it's like, did you want me to give it a chance, you know, see if it works, you know, like, what we did last week.

JW: Yeah, I mean...If it doesn't work for everybody, that's okay, right?

Brian: I mean, you don't really lose anything, I mean, except for, like, some minute of your time?

JW: Mmhmm, that makes sense. Is there anything... this one's kind of a you-may-need-a-second-to-think question. Is there anything you want the adults in your life to know about the anxiety that kids your age experience that they may not already know?

Brian: Um, no. Other than school, no.

JW: Okay, well, what about school?

Brian: There's, just stress with assignments, I guess, and all added up into one, and, like, multiple test quizzes, and I'll have to study all for that to make sure you can...complete.

JW: Yeah.

Brian: So we'll just be down.

JW: Yeah, so you aren't sure that they necessarily know how much stress there is in your life? That makes sense. Anything else you want to share about music and anxiety that you think is important?

Brian: Um, no.

JW: So then, the very last one we did was the emotions with song lyrics one, where we talked about your experiences of the same emotion that was in the song. So when I came, what was your understanding of emotion before I came in?

Brian: With, like, the songs you sing in choir?

JW: Just, like, emotion in general.

Brian: it depends on which one it is, to see if it's easy or hard to spot, to see how your group can react to it, but I had a... I'd say a decently good understanding of how all that (unclear) works.

JW: Okay. Like, what did you think of just emotion? Like...experiencing emotions.

Brian: Experience emotions? I can... I mean, I can definitely stay under control, and I can do my... do work, and I can still... still call(?) others when under emotions. But...I definitely won't be at my best during some.

JW: Yeah. Do you see certain emotions as being good, or being bad, or...

Brian: Honestly, I'd say...they're all good to a certain point, because, like, you can't just, like, keep it bottled in, you know?

JW: Yeah, that makes sense. So since I was here, has the way you thought about emotion changed at all?

Brian: Um...I won't... I'm not sure, not sure.

JW: That's okay. So whenever we were connecting your experience to the emotion in the music, what was that like for you?

Brian: Can you repeat the question again?

JW: So, when we connected your experience, so you had to think about your emotional experience and connect it to the music. What... what was that like for you?

Brian: I didn't really feel connected with the music, uh, music in choir. Not a personal experience I could really...

JW: Okay, so you found it kind of hard to connect to the music. Okay. Do you think that might be different if it was a different song or something that was a little more related to your life?

Brian: Yeah, maybe so, yeah.

JW: Okay. So...this goes... that ties right into my next question. So, since I was here, have you found yourself, when you're just listening to music or singing your own music, have you found yourself trying to connect your life experiences to that music?

Brian: Trying to think. If I don't have, like, a personal connection, then I don't really see... I really can't really see, like, a connection with my life experience.

JW: That makes sense. Did you find anything about that, uh, exercise helpful at all, or...

Brian: Um, I'm not sure.

JW: Not sure, not yet, okay, that's okay. Did you find it stressful at all to try to connect your emotions to the music?

Brian: Um, nah.

JW: Anything you want the adults in your life to know about emotions in general, about, like, the emotions that teens experience.

Brian: We can experience it in a different way, according to how they experience it.

JW: Anything else about music and emotion you think is important?

Brian: Uh, no.

JW: Awesome. I think that's it. That was my last question. Thank you so much, I appreciate you.

Brian: You have a great rest of your day.

JW: You too.

Kailee AL

JW: All I'm gonna do is just ask you some questions that, um, about anxiety, and about emotion, and about the stuff that we did last week when I was here. Alright, so first question, what was your overall understanding of anxiety before I came last week?

Kailee: Um, that, like...not everyone, like, feels a lot of anxiety, but, like...some people have it...

JW: do you feel like you've experienced anxiety before?

Kailee: Yes.

JW: Okay. Describe a little bit of what that feels like for you.

Kailee: It feels like whenever I'm stressed out, I think, like, maybe I'm not good enough or something, or I don't deserve everything I have. Um, and I just get stressed out about little things, and then big things, too.

JW: Okay. When you've experienced anxiety, have you ever used music or any kind of breathing technique to help before I came?

Kailee: Uh, I like listening to music. I feel like it, like, can calm me down, or I'll just, like...I might, like, read a book or something, and try to get, like, my brain, like, thinking about something else.

JW: That makes sense. So, since I came a week ago, have you tried using the box breathing technique in your daily life?

Kailee: Yes

JW: Did it...did you find it helpful?

Kailee: Yeah.

JW: You did, good. Do you want to say anything else about that? Like, are there any specific instances that you used it for?

Kailee: Just whenever I'm stressed out about, like, school I might do a version of it.

JW: Awesome. Alright, so then the second intervention I did was the Magnify, where you think about worst case scenario, best-case scenario, what's realistic, um, have you found any way to use that in your daily life since I came?

Kailee: Um, yeah, sometimes, like...whenever I think, like, something's really bad, I'll think, like, okay, but, like, it could be, like, worse, like, this could happen, but then I think, like. So, like, really, like, it's not that bad, like...

JW: Ok. Um, do you...do you think that this technique will be helpful at your next performance? Do you feel like you'll have less anxiety about the performance itself?

Kailee: Yes.

JW: Good. Is there anything about those two interventions for anxiety that you found especially helpful?

Kailee: Um...just like the breathing, I think.

JW: The breathing.

Kailee: yeah.

JW: Do you think that doing interventions like these could be helpful to students in other choirs if their directors knew how to use them?

Kailee: Yes.

JW: Why do you think that?

Kailee: I think it'll just help, like, people's stress, because, like, especially in high school, like, it's really stressful, and, like, whenever you do a lot of, like, after-school things, which does include, like, choir, like, it can be, like, stressful.

JW: Okay. Now, this one's a kind of thinking question, so it may take a minute. It's kind of a bigger question. Is there anything that you want the adults in your life to know about anxiety and about how kids your age experience anxiety that you're not sure they know about?

Kailee: Um, sometimes, like, adults...like, the ways they try to, like, deal with, like, kid's anxieties, it doesn't really help, and it's, like, it kind of stresses, like, us out more, and so it's just, like, I feel like we kind of have to deal with some things, like, on our own.

JW: So sometimes you just feel alone, like, the ways they want to help, so they want to help, but they don't necessarily know how. Yeah, that makes sense. Is there anything else you want to share about music and anxiety that you think is important?

Kailee: I just feel like music can, like, help, with anxiety, and it's like...especially whenever, like, you're in a choir and you have, like, your friends around you, like, it's just...

JW: Awesome. Alright, switching over to the emotion part, uh, what was kind of your general understanding of emotion before I came Last time?

Kailee: Ummm...sorry (said kind of under her breath, I could tell she was feeling a bit anxious)

JW: No, I know, I...there's anxiety about interviews, too, I guess. You're totally fine.

Kailee: I don't know how to word it.

JW: Um, so, when you think about the word emotion, what do you think about?

Kailee: I think of just, like, sadness or happiness, like, excitement.

JW: Okay. Do you think that certain emotions are good or bad, or...

Kailee: I think all emotions are good, because you have to, like, feel different feelings, so, like, whenever you're happy, like, you're actually happy, because, like, you felt sad before, so, like...

JW: Okay, so since I came a week ago, has the way you think about emotion changed at all?

Kailee: Yes.

JW: How?

Kailee: It's like... Sorry. I just think of, like...sorry, it's like...

JW: you don't have to apologize, you're ok

Kailee: I still feel like all the different kinds of emotions are, like, good, obviously, but, like, um, some, like, you can, like, make yourself feel better. Like, the breathing exercises and stuff.

JW: Okay. So when we used connecting your own emotional experience to the music, what was that like for you?

Kailee: I think it was, like, it was really cool, because, like, some of the music's, like, really sad, and it's just, like, it makes you, like, feel, like, certain things.

JW: Did you find it easy to connect your experiences to the music, or kind of difficult?

Kailee: Like, in the middle, because, like, I felt like I could relate, but at the same time, it's, like, obviously not everything in the song has, like, happened in my life.

JW: That makes sense. So, since I came last time, have you found yourself, when you're just listening to your own music or singing other music, do you find yourself connecting your own life and your own emotions to the emotions in the songs?

Kailee: Yes.

JW: Okay, do you have any examples, or...

Kailee: Like, in some of the songs, like, you're just singing about, like...like, being happy or being sad, it's just, like, I think about, like, my everyday life, because, like obviously I'm feeling happy or sad, like, certain...

JW: Is there anything about this intervention that you found especially helpful, and if so, what was it?

Kailee: the different exercises, I feel like it really helps with anxiety and stuff.

JW: Awesome! Did you find any part of it kind of stressful or uncomfortable when you were connecting the emotion to...the song.

Kailee: No.

JW: Is there anything you want the adults in your life to know about...how kids your age experience emotions?

Kailee: I feel like, especially, like, girls, we kind of get, like, dramatic and, like, won't have, like, a lot of emotions. It's just, like, again, we just need, like, time sometimes to just, like, think about it and just, like, calm down.

JW: Anything else you want to share about music and emotion that you think is important?

Kailee: Everything...just, like, connecting to songs sometimes, it can make you feel better.

JW: Okay, awesome. And that was my last question. That was great, thank you, I really appreciate you.

Sarah HB

JW: So I just have a few questions about anxiety, about emotions, and about the stuff we did last week when I was here. So, what was your, kind of, overall understanding of anxiety before I came a week ago?

Sarah: I think probably just when you're stressed out about stuff going on in your life.

JW: Okay. Do you feel like you personally have experienced anxiety before?

Sarah: Yeah, when I have a lot going on with school and outside school stuff. whenever it gets a lot, sometimes I get stressed out.

JW: Okay. When you've experienced anxiety, have you ever used music or any kind of breathing technique to help before?

Sarah: Yeah, I like to listen to music when I'm anxious about stuff, and it helps calm me down.

JW: Awesome. What are some other things you do to help with your anxiety?

Sarah: I like to...I'll kind of just put it aside for a day, and...spend time with my friends and get it off my mind.

JW: Makes sense. Alright, so since I came a week ago, have you used the box breathing technique I taught y'all?

Sarah: I have once, yeah.

JW: Okay, did you find it helpful?

Sarah: Yeah.

JW: Awesome. Okay, then the next one was the, think of the worst case scenario, think of the best case, think of what's realistic. Have you found any way to use that in your daily life since I was here?

Sarah: Um, in a way, I have.

JW: Okay

Sarah: kind of...was just thinking about, like, yeah, similar to that.

JW: Do you want to describe it?

Sarah: I don't really remember what I used it for, I just know I did use it, and...helped me realize it's not as bad as I was thinking about.

JW: Awesome. Do you think that when you go to your next performance, you'll have less anxiety about the performance because of this?

Sarah: Yeah.

JW: Is there anything about...these two different anxiety techniques that you found especially helpful.

Sarah: I really like the box breathing, because it takes my mind off...Just everyday life, and just breathing and taking time for myself.

JW: Awesome. Do you think that teaching these things could be helpful to students in other choirs, if their directors knew how to do it?

Sarah: Yeah.

JW: Awesome

Sarah: I don't know (I think this was a nervous response since I hadn't asked a question).

JW: Why do you think that it would be helpful?

Sarah: Well...probably with performance anxiety, and...maybe it's students who are overwhelmed with work and school, and just taking time in choir to learn new music.

JW: Awesome. Now, this one's kind of a trickier question, so you may need to think about it for a second. Is there anything that you want the adults in your life to know about anxiety that you're not sure they're aware of? Like, the anxiety that kids your age experience.

Sarah: Maybe just that...not bringing a ton of pressure helps so much with everything, because when it, several different parts of my life are all putting pressure, it really adds up fast.

JW: So, yeah. Makes sense. Is there anything else you want to share about music and anxiety that you think is important?

Sarah: I mean, music really helps. With helping anxiety.

JW: Awesome. Alright, switching to thinking about emotions, what was kind of your understanding of emotion in general?

Sarah: Um, just that it's...just how you're feeling, and...yeah, basically just how you're feeling.

JW: Do you think that certain emotions are good or bad?

Sarah: I think...good emotions are healthy emotions, and that even includes emotions like anger and stress and sadness, because sometimes those are healthy emotions.

JW: Okay. Since I came a week ago, has the way you've thought of...the way you think about emotion changed at all?

pause

Sarah: Um, not a lot, because I haven't focused as much on my emotion in this past week.

JW: That is totally fair. So when we were thinking about connecting your own emotional experience to the music you were singing, what was that like for you?

Sarah: Um, I feel like that was...putting more...personality into the music as well, and it sounds...like it has more emotion in it.

JW: Awesome. Did you find it easy to find something that... in your life that connected to the music, or kind of difficult?

Sarah: Um, I found it pretty easy.

JW: Do you think that might change just depending on which emotion you're trying to find?

Sarah: Yeah, because I was connecting more...like, energetic and, like, happy music with more happier emotions and experiences.

JW: Makes sense. So since I was here a week ago, have you found yourself, when you're just listening to your own music, or singing, or, uh, doing something else with music, have you noticed yourself thinking about connecting your own experiences to the emotions of a song.

Sarah: Yeah, yeah, it depends on, like, what music I'm listening to, but I have been making that connection.

JW: Is there anything about this particular intervention that you found especially helpful?

Sarah: Um. About, like, the emotion?

JW: The emotion part, yeah.

Sarah: Um. Yeah, I've...I liked...kind of...just being reminded of how, like. Music does connect to my emotions more.

JW: So just kind of a reminder of something you already knew, but you didn't really think about that much.

Sarah: Yeah.

JW: That makes sense... Was there any part of that connection that you found kind of stressful or uncomfortable?

Sarah: Not this past week, no.

JW: Okay. Um, is there anything you want the adults in your life to know about emotions, and about how kids your age experience emotions?

Sarah: Umm...probably just that there's...like, every day, I experience so many different emotions. And... that...it can change pretty quickly, but...sometimes, whenever I'm experiencing more than one at once it gets kind of stressful and confusing.

JW: Fair. Is there anything else you want to share about music and emotion that you think is important?

Sarah: I don't think so. I think that was it.

JW: Okay. Awesome. You gave some really helpful answers.

Scarlet 801762

JW: While I am doing the interview, I am just gonna ask you some questions about anxiety, about emotions, and about the stuff we did in class last week.

Scarlet: Okay.

JW: So, first question, what was your understanding of anxiety before I came, just general?

Scarlet: Well, I've dealt with anxiety for, like, a very, very long time, so I'm, like, I'm pretty well versed in it. But... Yeah.

JW: Okay, so since you have experienced it, can you kind of describe what it's like for you?

Scarlet: For me, when I'm anxious, I get, like, really bad stomach aches. Like, in the fourth grade, I'd have to be... I was gone for almost half a school year, because my stomach would just hurt every day that I went to school. And so, yeah, I get, like, really bad stomach aches, my head hurts, I just get, like, really warm when I'm anxious.

JW: Okay, so when you get anxious, have you ever used music or any kind of breathing technique prior to...

Scarlet: Yes, I have. I, like, I'll use my earbuds and I'll listen to music, like, when I get home or, like, after school, before rehearsals or something.

JW: Okay, so what are some other things you've used to help with your anxiety?

Scarlet: Ummm... well, there was, like, the 5-4-3-2-1 method, it's like the 5 things you see, like, that thing, um, my mom would have me do, like, breathing exercises that we did, um, when you came. Yeah, that was mainly the stuff I did, so...

JW: Do you find those helpful most of the time?

Scarlet: Yes, I do.

JW: Good. So since I came a week ago, have you used the box breathing technique in your daily life?

Scarlet: I have, because it's more like... I kind of forgot it existed, and then I'm, like, reminded of it, I'm like, oh, yeah, that actually exists, and it's an easy way to do stuff during the school day. So it's like, I had, like. A quiz today in pre-cal and it was not a very easy quiz, and during it, I was getting kind of stressed out, and I was like, okay, just, like, just chill out, calm down, and so...

JW: Okay, good. Do you find it helpful when you use it?

Scarlet: Yeah. I find it helpful.

JW: Good. Alright, so then the second thing we did was the, Magnify technique, where we thought about worst-case scenario, best-case scenario, and what's realistically gonna happen at a performance. Uh, have you used that technique for other things in your daily life since I was here?

Scarlet: I haven't really, like, consciously used it, I guess, but, like, usually when I think of things that, like, I'm gonna be doing, usually that's kind of my everyday, just...

JW: Okay, so it kind of just put a name to something you already do.

Scarlet: Yeah.

JW: Makes sense. Do you think that when you go to your next performance, you'll feel less anxiety if you use that to think through?

Scarlet: Yes.

JW: Okay. Is there anything about those two anxiety interventions that you found especially helpful?

Scarlet: Um, I... personally think the breathing one's really helpful, especially because I have so many, like, physical reactions to getting anxious, so it helps me, like, not get as warm, or, like, be able to just chill down and slow my heart rate and that kind of stuff.

JW: Awesome. Do you think that teaching these anxiety techniques could be helpful to students in other choirs, if choir directors knew how to teach them?

Scarlet: Yes, 100%.

JW: Mmhmm. Why do you think it would be helpful?

Scarlet: Because I feel like a lot of people, like, maybe they're not able to get access to these kinds of, like, mental health resources outside of school, and so to be able to have even just a couple of ways to manage anxiety, not just for choir, but for other kinds of aspects of their life, would definitely help.

JW: That's, um...this... this one's a question that's made everyone have to stop and think for a minute. So, is there anything about anxiety that you want the adults in your life to know about, especially, like, how teenagers experience anxiety that we may not be aware of as adults.

Scarlet: I think it's mainly just that with the introduction of, like, technology and different kinds of, like...productions and all different kinds of stuff, there... it's multiple layers than it was even just, like, 10 years ago. There's so many layers to it, like, if it's in a performance and, like, your voice cracks or something, like, someone might be recording that, and it'd be able to be posted everywhere. Like, that's...something that's able to be done now that you couldn't do in, like, my mom when she was a kid, so...

JW: That makes sense. Is there anything else you want to share about music and anxiety that you think is important?

Scarlet shrugs

JW: Okay. *laughs* I'm just gonna say it was a shrug off-camera so that I have a transcription of that. Okay, switching to the emotion side of things, what was your understanding of emotion in general before I came?

Scarlet: Well, I understand that, like, like, some people get really emotional over certain things, and, like, it's just a different reaction for every person, depending on what happens.

JW: Okay. Do you feel like certain emotions are good, or bad, or...

Scarlet: I think certain emotions definitely have better consequences than others do.

JW: Makes sense. Uh, since I was here, has the...words are hard. Since I was here a week ago, have you...thought about...has the way you think about emotion changed at all?

Scarlet: Not really, I haven't really had any huge emotional thing happen recently, so...

chuckle

JW: Alright, so thinking about the last intervention where we thought about our own music and our own emotional experiences using the music. Uh, kind of describe what that was like for you, connecting your emotional experience to the music.

Scarlet: Um, I think it was a lot easier to be able to just, like, go through the music and actually be like, oh, okay, so, like, like this is the meaning for this, and it can help me kind of sing it, like, follow the crescendos better, oh, okay, because the emotion's growing higher.

JW: So it kind of helped you make more sense of what the music was doing when you felt like you understood the lyrics.

Scarlet: Yes.

JW: Okay. Did you find it easy to connect your experience to the music, or was it kind of difficult?

Scarlet: It was kind of difficult for that song.

JW: Okay. Yeah, I think the answer to that one can be kind of dependent on which song it was. Alright, uh now, thinking about listening to music or singing music on your own. Since we did this a week ago, have you found yourself connecting your own emotional experiences to other songs

Scarlet: Yes

JW:...and other music in your life? Okay, can you give me maybe an example, or describe it?

Scarlet: Well, I'm a big fan of, like, musical theater and that kind of stuff, and I'm doing college auditions soon,

JW: Oh!

Scarlet: ...and so when I'm looking for music to, like, perform an audition with, I try to find pieces that are easier for me to relate to at least a bit emotionally, so that way it's able to be performed a bit better.

JW: That makes sense. Uh, was there anything about this specific intervention that you found especially helpful?

Scarlet: Um, I think being able to put names to different kind of techniques was helpful, because that way, if someone's like, oh, like, I need help with this, I can be like, I can actually tell them what to do instead of just showing it.

JW: That makes sense. Uh, was there any part of this technique of connecting the emotions to the song that you found kind of stressful or uncomfortable?

Scarlet: Not really, no.

JW: Uh, kind of going back to that other question, is there anything you want the adults in your life to know about how kids your age experience emotions that they may not be aware of?

Scarlet: I don't really know. Sorry.

JW: Okay. Totally fine. Uh, is there anything else you want to share about music and emotion, just in general, that you think is important?

Scarlet: Not really, no. But going back to the last question,

JW: Ok.

Scarlet: I think it's just another thing with, like, how much media is readily available now, so you're able to find more stuff you can emotionally connect to, and that kind of stuff with music.

JW: That makes sense. Alright, and that was actually my last question. So, I'm going to click save, and then I'm going to click stop recording.

Maria 745059

JW: Okay, so I am just gonna ask you some questions about anxiety, about emotion, and about some of the stuff we did last week. Uh, first question, what was kind of your general understanding of anxiety before the interventions last week? So, before I was here last week?

Maria: I know about it. I...

JW: You know plenty about it?

Maria: yeah.

JW: Okay. Have you personally experienced anxiety before?

Maria: Yeah.

JW: Can you kind of describe how it is for you?

Maria: It's kind of...it, like, locks up your whole body, and you can't, like, move or talk, you know, and you get all sweaty.

JW: Yup. So, when you've experienced anxiety, have you ever used music or any kind of breathing technique to help before this week?

Maria: Um...I mean, I usually just...it's kind of like...always, like, a little bit there, so not really, it's just, like...

JW: You just kind of deal with it as you can.

Maria: Yeah.

JW: Yup, fair. Do you have any other things you use to help with your anxiety? Any...

Maria: Prozac.

JW: Alright, I mean, that is definitely something. What about, like, any techniques, any kind of music?

Maria: No. Music's helpful.

JW: Okay, just like listening to your own music?

Maria nods

JW: That makes sense. Alright, so since I was here last week, have you used the box breathing in your daily life?

Maria: Yeah I showed my mom how to do it.

JW: You showed her? Did you or her find it helpful?

Maria: Well, she has lung problems.

JW: Oh, okay.

Maria: So it just...yeah. But...it kind of makes me lightheaded.

JW: That's fair, so that might mean you might need to speed it up just a little bit, because, yeah, if you do... if you do it too long, yeah, you can make yourself lightheaded, so that's a good thing to think about. So... since I was here... alright, so switching to the second one I used, which was the, worst case scenario, best case scenario, how realistic is it? Have you used that for...thinking through any other situations in your life since I was here.

Maria: Not really. Sorry.

JW: Not really? Okay, that's totally fine. No, you don't have to apologize. Uh, do you think that when you go to your next performance, you'll feel a little less anxiety?

Maria: I don't really get anxiety for performances.

JW: Oh, okay, so performances are the one place you're like, I'm good,

Maria: Yeah.

JW: I'm pretty much right there. Alright, awesome. Um, is there anything about those two techniques that you found helpful?

Maria: The breathing one, if you're, like, freaking out, like, super freaking out, it could help.

JW: Okay, so, like, in a panic attack kind of situation, maybe?

Maria: Maybe, yeah.

JW: Okay. Do you think that learning these interventions could be helpful to students in other choirs?

Maria: Yeah.

JW: If the choir directors knew how to teach it.

Maria: Mhmm.

JW: Okay, what about them do you think might be helpful?

Maria: It kind of gets you out of your head. If you're, like, psyching yourself out.

JW: Yeah.

Maria: Helps you come back to the present?

JW: Oh yeah, that's fair. Okay, this one has made everybody have to stop and think for just a second. So...is there anything that you want the adults in your life to know about how teenagers experience anxiety that they may not know about?

Maria: Anxiety. Just anxiety, or...

JW: Yeah, just anxiety, like, anything you want the adults to know about experiencing anxiety.

Maria: It's just the same as theirs.

JW: Okay

Maria: but we have...I think it goes...like, they think less of it because we're kids, they think we have less on our plate, but we... it's like, you know, it's the same as theirs.

JW: Yeah. No, that's a good point. Anything else you want to share about music and anxiety that you think is important?

Maria: It can help express emotions...that you didn't know you needed to express.

JW: Yeah, and that is exactly what we're going to next, is emotions. So, what was kind of your understanding of emotion in general before I came?

Maria: I know how to understand it.

JW: Okay. Do you believe that certain emotions are good, or bad, or...

Maria: They're just emotions. You feel them. You're supposed to feel them. They wouldn't exist if we weren't supposed to feel them.

JW: I like that. So since I was here, has the way you think about emotion changed at all?

Maria: Negatory.

JW: No? Okay. Alright, so when we were connecting your own emotional experience to the music we were singing, what was that like for you?

Maria: Uh.

JW: So when I asked y'all to think about, okay, think about a situation where you felt the same emotion that we're singing about in this song.

Maria: Like...

JW: Did you find it easy, or kind of difficult to come up with one?

Maria: It's kind...I mean...that song's very... it's like a nice, uplifting song to me. I don't...it's hard to, like, connect a negative emotion to it. But the words, if you're talking about the words, you like coming out of, like, a dark place, maybe?

JW: Okay, yeah, I like that. So, since that song wasn't necessarily that helpful, since I was here, have you found yourself noticing when you're listening to your own music, or singing other music, have you noticed yourself connecting your own life scenarios to that music?

Maria: Always.

JW: Okay, so kind of maybe was already something you were doing, but it was...I kind of gave you a name for it, basically, even if you already had one.

Maria nods

JW: Okay. Or it's just something you already did. That is totally fine, too. I mean, it's not like I invented it. Is there anything about that connecting your own experiences to the music that you found especially helpful?

Maria: Um, it's easier to think about it if you're thinking about it from, like, another person's point of view. Kind of like you're thinking about it, but you're not you.

JW: Hmm, interesting. So, kind of, if you're...not necessarily putting your own perspective...

Maria: Like, someone's telling you about it, and then you can think about it, and then you're like, oh, okay, okay.

JW: Was there any part of putting your own emotions into the songs that you found kind of stressful or uncomfortable?

Maria: No.

JW: Okay. Is there anything you want the adults in your life to know about how teens experience emotions that they may not be aware of?

Maria: I feel like teenagers may experience emotions a little bit more loudly or bigger than adults. Sorry, Mr. Shen. I know I'm not an adult yet, but...

JW: yeah. I mean, that feels like a pretty fair assessment. Uh, anything else you want to share about just music and emotion in general that you think is important?

Maria: Well, if you listen to only sad music, you're gonna feel sad. If you listen to happy music, it might help, I don't know.

JW: Okay, so just that the music you listen to connects to the emotions.

Maria: Mmhmm, the emotions.

JW: Awesome, and that was the last question.

Maria: Huzzah.

JW: Awesome, thank you!

Maria: I can leave?

JW: Yes.

Sabrina 761129

JW: Okay, so, uh, for the interview, I'm really just asking a few questions about anxiety, emotion, and the stuff we did in class the other day when I was here.

Sabrina: Mmhmm.

JW: So, tell me a little bit about what your understanding was of anxiety before I come.

Sabrina: So, anxiety, I feel like it's kind of just, like, this feeling, like, inside, where you just kind of feel like. Like, there's just, like, a lot of emotions and stuff going through your head, especially when you're, like when you're doing, like, a lot of stuff in school, and, like, outside of your life, if there's just, like, a lot of, like, commitments that you have, and just, like, everything in your life is just, like, jumbled up, I feel like, it just gets hard to, like, manage all the things that are going through your mind.

JW: Okay, that's...way to describe it. So do you feel like you personally have experienced anxiety before?

Sabrina: I don't think I've experienced, like, really, really bad anxiety. I think I've, like, had, like, moments in my life where I've been, like, really, really stressed out with, like struggling to, like, manage, like, a lot of different things, but, I don't think it's been, like, severe, but there have been times where I've kind of felt like, oh, maybe, like.

JW: Oh, kind of

Sabrina: yeah.

JW: So when you have felt that way and felt kind of stressed out and just kind of like, things were hard to manage. Have you ever used music or any kind of breathing technique to help you?

Sabrina: Yeah, music definitely does help me. Like, I'll just, like, sit in my room and, like, put my AirPods in and just, like, listen to a song. Yeah, definitely. And then, um, the breathing technique thing, I actually, like use what we did, like, I think that kind of, like...I've been doing it recently, where you just, like, take a second to just, like, sit and, like, breathe and just, like, collect your thoughts and everything, and so I think that definitely does help a lot.

JW: Okay. What are some other things you've done in the past to help with your anxiety?

Sabrina: Um...

JW: Like, other than music and breathing.

Sabrina: Honestly, sleeping. I just, like...sleeping has been something that I realized that, like, you need sleep to, like, function. Um, I also like to watch, like, movies, and just to, like... because I'm not someone that, like, likes to, like, hold on to, like. a specific, like, emotion too long, like, I think I, like, get over things pretty fast, and so just, like, I think a movie or something to just, like, distract myself definitely helps.

JW: That makes sense. Alright, so, you mentioned a second ago, since we did the box breathing, you've used it in your daily life. Did you find it helpful?

Sabrina: Yeah, yeah, I think, when you have, like, a lot of things going on, it's hard to just, like, get, like, lost in all of that, and so, like, just taking a second for yourself to just, like. Breathe, like, really, be, like, in the moment. I think that helps.

JW: Yeah, absolutely. So then the second thing we did was where we talked about...worst case scenario, best case scenario, most realistic scenario. Have you used that technique? Just, have you noticed yourself thinking through that thought process on other things in your daily life?

Sabrina: Um, not really, but I think that, like, well, we haven't really performed much, like, recently, but, I did the All state process, and I remember, like, very, very early on, like, in freshman year, I was, like, very scared, and that was, like, a thing that would happen to me where I would, like, be, like, very nervous. I'd be, like, shaking in, like, an audition room or something, but I think the more that I did it, I've overcome that. And so, like, this, like, past, like, recent audition that I had, I, like, went in, I was, like completely okay. And so, like, I think that's...um, getting used to just, like, doing things, like, multiple times, that helps a lot.

JW: Yeah, absolutely. Do you feel like, because we talked through the good, the bad, and the realistic, do you think that'll help you feel a little less anxious at your next performance, like, at UIL?

Sabrina: Yeah, I think it also just comes with, like, time, and just, like, I don't think that, like, one moment is gonna, like, completely alter your life. I think it's just, like, a gradual process.

JW: Absolutely. Where was I? Oh. Is there anything about those two interventions specifically for anxiety that you found especially helpful?

Sabrina: I think...the thing...I think it is the thing that you said about, like, oh, like, what's the worst case...what's the best case scenario? I think I...I kind of already did, like, think like that, if I'm ever, like, nervous, but yeah, I think that would be something that would help people that are, like, struggling a lot with, like, um, nervousness or, like, anxiety.

JW: Okay. Do you think that these anxiety interventions would help students in other choirs if their directors introduced them?

Sabrina: I think it would, because especially, like, I think when you're, like, super-duper involved in choir, because, like, I'm, like, the officer board, I do, like, All state, and like, everything, and so sometimes, like, it can get overwhelming with, like, the work that we also have to do at school as well. So yeah, just, like, taking a moment to just, like have that moment where you're like, okay, like, it's gonna be okay, like, just take a breather, like, I think that definitely...if it's, like, consistent, I think that, like, it definitely would help.

JW: Alright, this is the one that everybody needs to take a minute to think about before they answer. So, is there anything about anxiety as a teen that you would like the adults in your life to know that you think they might not be aware of?

Sabrina: Hmm... *giggle* I think that it's, like... More than just, like, oh, like, you're struggling with this, like, you need, like help, like, right now. Like, this is, like, what you need to do, but I

think it's more just, like...giving each person, like, their own, like, space and time to, like, heal on their own, and just, like, rather than, like, oh, this is a solution, helping them, like, work through finding their own, like, way to find a solution. Rather than thinking, like, oh, this is a set way to solve it, because everybody is, like, different, and you might be going through different things, and so I think it really just depends on, like, the individual and what they need, and just to...just, provide, like, a space for...to listen to what they need and, like, want.

JW: Yeah, absolutely. Is there anything else you want to share about music and anxiety that you think is important?

Sabrina: Mmm, I think...mmm, especially, like, singing is, it's a lot about just, like, finding the confidence to just, like, step up and do something, and so I think that the more, like, as I mentioned, like, the more you do it, like, the more it kind of gets rid of that, like, fear of, like, I guess, like, also, like, public speaking, and just, like, speaking well, singing well, like, when you're put on the spot. And so it definitely goes hand in hand. I think it's very...

JW: Yeah, absolutely. So switching from anxiety to the emotion part of what we did, what was kind of your general understanding of emotion before I came in?

Sabrina: Umm, just, like, you're happy, you're sad, you have, like, thoughts, and they make you feel, like, a certain way, and...yeah.

JW: Yeah. Do you believe that certain emotions are good or bad, or...Do you categorize them that way?

Sabrina: Emotions are good or bad. I think...yeah, I mean, obviously, like, when you're, like, sad, or just, like, upset about something, that's not a good feeling to have, like, all the time, and then it's...ideally better to just, like, kind of have, like, a positive outlook on things.

JW: Uh, so since I was here, has the way you think about emotion changed at all?

Sabrina: Umm...not really. I think I usually try to just, like, have, like, a... think about, like, how these could go better, and just, like, have, like, a...more, like, a positive mindset on things like that.

JW: Yeah. Absolutely. So, thinking about when I had you relate your own emotional experience to the music that we were singing about. What was that like for you?

Sabrina: Definitely. I think I, um, especially when we, like, sing, and, like, we do, like, pieces, I try to, like relate how, like, relate things that happen, like, in my life to the music, and I think...I'm also, like, an actor, like, I do, like, musical and stuff, so, like, sometimes, like, being the character, like, it comes... you have to try to, like, relate yourself and, like, put yourself in that, like, position. And so, yeah, that's something I enjoy doing, and I think that's, like, important to, like, really feeling the music and just, like, getting a better, deeper meaning out of it.

JW: Absolutely, so did you find it pretty easy to do that, or kind of difficult?

Sabrina: I think I found it easy because it's something that, like. I think it, like, makes you, like, sound better. Like, I... there's this thing that I did, like, I was singing a song, and, like. when I was, like, just sitting, like, singing it normally, like, I didn't... it wasn't, like, it was good, but, like, it wasn't, like, amazing, but I smiled, and it just kind of, like, made the song better, like, I sounded better when you were naturally, like, you were feeling an emotion.

JW: Awesome. Alright, so since I came last week, have you found yourself, when you're just listening to your own music, or singing music, or doing something else with music, have you found yourself thinking and connecting more to the emotions in the song? Based on things you felt in your life.

Sabrina: Well, yeah, I think it, I think that's something that I already did, but, um, yes, after we did that with, Oh Star, and yeah, that was the song, I think it, made me think that, like, oh, like, this is, like, something that we do, because I think right now, like, most of our songs are in, like, different languages, and so it's, like, a little bit difficult, but, yeah, it's something that definitely, like...is in the back of my mind.

JW: Is there anything about doing this that you found especially helpful?

Sabrina: Umm...like, anything specifically, or...

JW: Well, you've kind of already covered a lot of that, because you said you already kind of did that emotional connection thing. So was there any part of doing this that you found kind of stressful or uncomfortable?

Sabrina: No, I think it was...I think it was good.

JW: Okay. Uh, now, kind of going back to the question I asked about anxiety, is there anything you want the adults in your life to know about how teens experience emotions?

Sabrina: Yeah, so, um, I think, especially as a teen, it's like, your emotions are always... it's like a rollercoaster, like, nothing is, like, the same, and so I guess it's just, like, adapting to, like... sometimes, like, we're gonna have bad days, sometimes we're gonna have good days, just, like, again, like, I think listening is, like, a very, like, thing that, like, sometimes I feel like people don't, like, listen, and so I think just, like, taking a minute to just really, like, understand, like, what someone is going through, I think that definitely, like, will help, like, a lot.

JW: Awesome. Is there anything else you want to share about music and emotion that you think is important?

Sabrina: I think that's it.

JW: So, that was my last questions. Okay, hit save, stop recording...

Christine 880912 (Christine was EXTREMELY soft spoken, to the point that I barely caught most of what she said in person, and even less was clear in the recording. I transcribed to the best of my ability but a lot is missing because it could not be understood)

JW: I am just going to ask you a few questions about anxiety, about emotions, and about the stuff that we did last time. So, all the stuff that we talked about the last time I was here. So tell me, what was kind of your general understanding of anxiety before I got here?

Christine: It's just a feeling and you don't know what to do(very quiet audio, can hardly make it out at all)

JW: Okay, yeah, that makes sense. Is that something that you feel like you've experienced before?

Christine: Yeah.

JW: Yeah, just... Maybe a little bit, just every so often. What... what does it kind of feel like when you experience it?

Christine: Upset.

JW: Like, just getting upset. Okay. So when you've experienced anxiety before, did you ever use music or any kind of breathing technique before the last time I was here?

Christine: Listening to music.

JW: Listening to music? Did that seem to help?

Christine: Yeah.

JW: Okay, what are some other things you've used to help with your anxiety, if you have any?

Christine shrugs and shakes her head

JW: Nothing? Okay. So since I was here last week, have you used the box breathing technique in your regular life, where we did the breathe in for 4, hold for 4, out for 4, hold for 4?

Christine: no

JW: No, you haven't tried it? Okay. Do you think you might at some point, if you think it'll be helpful?

Christine nods head

JW: Yeah, just...just haven't had that much stress this last week

Christine nods head yes

JW: Well that's good. Alright, so the second thing we did was the one where we talked about worst-case scenario, best case scenario, and, like, what's realistically gonna happen in the performance. So, did you find using that helpful? Do you think it'll help you feel a little bit less anxiety the next time you perform?

Christine: Yeah

JW: Yeah, you think so? Have you used that way of thinking in anything else since that class, where you kind of think, worst, best, realistic?

Christine: We had to choose, like, one-time leaders for a (unclear) competition. But I...I was like, I don't really know. Like you know.

JW: Oh, okay. So, so, what kind of competition?

Christine: Art competition.

JW: An art competition? Oh, okay, so you kind of thought about...whether you wanted to be a part of it.

Christine nods

JW: That makes a lot of sense, that's awesome. Did it kind of help you feel a little bit better after you thought through it that way?

Christine nods

JW: Yeah, awesome. Alright, so is there anything specific about those two interventions for anxiety that you found especially helpful?

Christine: I'm thinking, I think... The, like, best and worst...

JW: The best case, worst case scenario? Awesome. Do you think that it would be helpful to other...choir students, if...um, if they were taught these interventions, if their choir directors knew how to teach them these.

Christine nods

JW: You think so? What parts of them do you think would be really helpful?

Christine: So, when they're, like, singing in front of everyone for the first time, they're not, like, as scared as...

JW: Oh, okay, so, like, beginners to help them kind of feel less scared about the first time they're singing? Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. Alright, this is the one that gets everybody. So, thinking about, anxiety and experiencing anxiety as a teenager, is there anything you would want the adults in your life to know about what it's like to experience anxiety as a teenager? That they might not already know.

Christine: Sometimes you can't regulate it like...they're (unclear) to help you.

JW: So, yeah, it's harder to regulate when you're a kid and you don't know how to do it yourself quite yet.

Christine: Yeah.

JW: Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. Is there anything else you can think of about music and anxiety that you think is important?

Christine: Um, no.

JW: No, okay. Alright, what was kind of your understanding of emotion? Before I came, so...

Christine: How you feel

JW: Just how you feel? Okay. Do you believe that certain emotions are good or bad?

Christine: I think that all of that is linked. (Very difficult to hear the rest of this sentence, seemed to be something about how emotion lets you know what's going on with you)

JW: Oh, okay, so more like they're just ways to tell you what's going on. That makes sense. So, since I've been here, has the way you think about emotion changed at all?

Christine: No.

JW: No, that's okay. So whenever we were talking about connecting your emotional experience with the song that you were singing. Uh, and kind of thinking about how the...your emotion relates to the music. What...what was that experience like for you?

Christine: Um, that was like... (unclear). Performance wise, like, let the audience know what we are singing.

JW: You think it would be a really good way to connect with the audience so that they can tell what's happening? That makes sense. Did...did you find it kind of easy to connect your emotions to the song, or was it kind of difficult?

Christine: It was easy.

JW: It was easy? Okay. So, since then, have you found yourself, when you're listening to your own music or singing other music, have you noticed yourself thinking about how your life and your emotions in your life connect to the songs you're listening to?

Christine: No

JW: Not really? Okay. Is there anything about this intervention of connecting your...your emotions to the music that you found helpful.

Christine: Like, (unclear) on this one. (Unclear)

JW: So you think it helps you understand both the music and yourself?

Christine: Yeah.

JW: Okay, awesome. Was there any part of that technique of connecting the emotion to the music that you found kind of stressful or uncomfortable?

Christine shakes head no

JW: No? Okay. Is there anything about emotions that you want the adults in your life to know that they may not realize? Like, experiencing emotions as a teenager.

Christine: Oh. Yeah, it's, like...you move, like, overthink a lot. People are stressed about it. (Quiet and unclear)

JW: Oh, so, like, you feel like you experience a lot of emotions and...you get kind of overwhelmed by them, and that stresses you out. Makes sense. Is there anything else you wanted to share about music and emotion that you think is important?

Christine shakes head

JW: No? Okay, that was my last question. So, thank you so much. I'm gonna stop Recording...

Ariana 759532

JW: Okay, so for the interview, I am just asking you some questions about anxiety, some questions about emotion, and some questions about the stuff we did last week, which hopefully you remember some of it. I know you were saying you were...having trouble remembering what box breathing was, that's okay. So what was your understanding of anxiety before the interventions a week ago?

Ariana: I just feel like anxiety is something that people face. And there's, like, many ways that you can, like, help it, or make it better.

JW: Okay. So, do you feel like you have experienced anxiety before?

Ariana: Mmhmm.

JW: What does that feel like for you?

Ariana: Just feels like you're scared of, like, a bad outcome.

JW: Okay. Uh, so when you've experienced anxiety, have you ever used music or any kind of breathing technique to help before this?

Ariana: I do like to listen to music to help me relax.

JW: Okay. What are some other ways you've used to help with your anxiety?

Ariana: I just think about, like, good things, or, like, something better that could happen instead of, like, the worst, the bad outcome.

JW: Okay, awesome. Does that seem to help a lot?

Ariana: Sometimes

JW: Sometimes, that's fair. So, since I was here last week, have you used the box breathing technique at all in your daily life? The breathe in for 4, hold for 4, out for 4?

Ariana: Mmm, not really, but, like, just trying to, like, focus on my breathing to make sure I'm breathing right.

JW: Okay, awesome. Do you think that you might use it in the future if you find yourself in a real stressful situation?

Ariana: Mmhmm.

JW: Okay. So, the second thing we did was the technique where we think about the worst possible scenario, the best scenario, and what's realistically probably gonna happen. Uh, do you...do you feel like you'll be less anxious at your next performance because we did that?

Ariana: Yeah. I think more confident.

JW: Yeah, and so you found that to be kind of a helpful way to think through things?

Ariana: Mmhmm.

JW: Have you used that technique at all for anything else? Like, found yourself thinking, okay, what's the worst that could happen here, best that could happen here, realistic?

Ariana: Mmhmm, yeah I have.

JW: You have, what, what did you use it for?

Ariana: I think it was last year, when we did solo ensemble, I thought about, like, the best thing that could happen, and the worst thing that happened, and what might just be realistic.

JW: Awesome. So, is there anything about those two ways to help with anxiety that you found especially helpful?

Ariana: I think, like, the whenever... You think about the worst for the best, like, it, like, helps you, like, calm down so you know, like, the bad things, and you know the good things, but you know, like, what's actually might happen. Good way to think about.

JW: Yeah. Makes sense. Do you think that these two anxiety interventions could be helpful to students in other choirs if their directors knew how to do them?

Ariana: Yeah, totally.

JW: Okay. Is there anything...okay, this is the question that everyone needs a minute to think about. Is there anything that you would like the adults in your life to be aware of about anxiety as a teenager?

Ariana: I feel like they should just...see what the teen might, like, be thinking about, what the situation could be, and, like, help them take a minute to, like, relax, like, help it.

JW: Okay, so just kind of give you some space to figure things out,

Ariana: Mmhmm.

JW: ...that makes sense. Is there anything else you wanted to share about music and anxiety that you think is important?

Ariana: I feel like music does, like, it does really help with anxiety. You know, you just feel like safe... safe things to do.

JW: Awesome. Alright, switching over to thinking about emotion. What was kind of your understanding of emotion before...I came last week.

Ariana: Everybody, everybody experiences emotions, and it's okay to feel a certain emotions in certain situations.

JW: Okay. Do you feel like some emotions are good and some emotions are bad?

Ariana: Mmhmm

JW: Which ones would you say are, like, the bad ones?

Ariana: Mmm, I feel like sad, and angry could be too, like, in certain situations.

JW: In certain situations, okay, that makes sense. So since I came last week, has the way you thought about emotion changed at all?

Ariana: Mmm, it's the same

JW: About the same, that's okay. So, when I came in and we were thinking about connecting your own experience to...the music that we were singing. Uh, what was that like for you, connecting your emotional experience to the emotion in the music?

Ariana: It's just, like...helped me see, like, music really does, like, show more emotion, when we really put, like, to see what the music is about. Yeah.

JW: Yeah, I like that. Did you find it easy to connect your own life to the music, or kind of difficult?

Ariana: Easy.

JW: This one's kind of...question, have you found yourself...since then, when you're listening to your own music, or singing music on your own, thinking about how your own emotions connect to the songs you're listening to.

Ariana: Mmhmm.

JW: Is that something that you had done before, or just something that kind of was a little bit new?

Ariana: I feel like I've...we've done it before

JW: You've done it before? Is there anything about doing it the way that I did it that you found especially helpful?

Ariana: Like, putting more attention on, like, what it's talking about? Like, the emotion that it expresses.

JW: Okay. Like, it could help you sing it more...

Ariana: When you can feel the emotion that it's trying to...

JW: Yeah, that makes sense. Was there any part of it that you found kind of stressful or uncomfortable?

Ariana shakes head no

JW: Okay, Is there anything you want the adults in your life to know about emotions as a teenager that they may not be aware of?

Ariana: I feel like...I think it's emotion going more, like, heavy, so, like...like how it used to be, so I feel like they should...help..kids more, when they're feeling emotions, so they can feel, like, safe, like, feel like they're understood about their emotion.

JW: Okay, that makes sense...is there anything else you wanted to share about music and emotion that you think is important?

Ariana shakes head no

JW: Awesome. That was my last question, so thank you so much

Riya 770704

JW: Alright, so, I am just going to ask you some questions about anxiety, about emotion, and about the stuff that we did last week when I was here.

Riya: Sure.

JW: Alright, uh, so what was kind of your understanding of anxiety in general before I came a week ago?

Riya: Anxiety in general isn't really talked a lot in middle school or elementary. I think it's just something that people know exists, but it isn't really, you know...having... there's not a lot of awareness for it, so I actually didn't know a lot about it, and I still kind of don't. I'm not gonna, you know, say I learned a lot about it. I know that it's, incredibly difficult to handle, and I don't really know, many, you know, symptoms of it, or things like...of that nature, because I don't believe I have it. Um, maybe in small increments I do, but not generally, so that's kind of my overview on anxiety, but, I know it it's incredibly difficult.

JW: Okay. Do you feel like you've experienced anxiety before, even on, like, a small level?

Riya: I think small level, of course, because I think any human has that

JW: Yeah

Riya: especially during, you know, auditions. I'm very, I participate a lot during different things. I go on student panels, I audition for Allstate, things like that, so it was kind of scary at first, so I think that's, like, small increments of anxiety, but nothing too big.

JW: Yeah. So, when you've experienced those little bits of anxiety, what does that kind of feel like for you?

Riya: It just feels, like, a little...it feels like I can't really control, like, I feel a little shaky, but, I mean, I'm very...I've always been very, like, in tune with my emotions, so I'm able to, you know, understand what emotion I'm feeling, I understand how to fix that emotion that I'm feeling, so I usually, you know, I usually have a stress toy, or things like that, so, that's kind of how I go about it.

JW: That makes sense. So, when you've experienced some stress, have you ever used music or any kind of breathing technique to help?

Riya: For sure, I love music. Music has been, like, my entire life. So, I think you can agree with that.

JW: Yeah

Riya: Definitely. So, music is definitely something I use. Breathing techniques? You know, the exercise you showed last week, I actually do use that on...usually on auditions and things like that, so I was able to, you know, understand why you showed that, because it does help, and I do use that.

JW: Awesome. So, I know you mentioned, like, the stress toys. Are there other techniques you've used before to help with your anxiety?

Riya: I like to talk to people about it. I think it really helps. Um, my parents are a big, you know, person to talk to. They're always open, they're always making time for me, so that's kind of who I usually talk to the most.

JW: That's awesome. So, you mentioned you have used box breathing before. Since I talked about it last week, have you used it in your daily life?

Riya: Not recently, because there hasn't really been any areas to use it.

JW: Right.

Riya: But, I've had experience with it.

JW: Okay, do you feel like you probably will use it again later?

Riya: For sure, yeah. It's been...it's been pretty helpful.

JW: Awesome. Alright, so then the second one I did was the technique of thinking worst case scenario, best case, and what's realistically probably going to happen in a performance. Do you feel like that is going to help you have less anxiety at your next performance?

Riya: Sure. Yeah, actually, my parents told me about that technique, too.

JW: Oh, did they? Awesome!

Riya: I do have experience with that...they do help, really, they do. It kind of brings you back to reality, you know, you're just...

JW: Yeah, absolutely. So, have you used that technique in your daily life as well for other things?

Riya: Yeah, like, I think today we had an AP Human test, and I was like, oh my god, I'm gonna fail, but no, let's, like, think probably, like, realistically, you know, I'm probably gonna pass, things like that, so it does help that way.

JW: Awesome. Alright, so...what about those two interventions do you find especially helpful? So, either the box breathing or this thinking through it technique.

Riya: I like the box breathing, because I feel like when I'm tuning in on my breath, I kind of tune everything else out of my head. It just calms everything down. So that's what works with me.

JW: Awesome. Do you think that...teaching these interventions in a choir could be helpful to other students.

Riya: Super, yeah, for sure. I mean, you can see a lot, like, especially in, I'd like to say 5th grade and 6th grade was when I saw a lot of, kids, you know, get really nervous about singing in public with a beat. Even with the group choir, I had pretty big choirs in elementary and middle school, but even with those big choirs, you can kind of see them, they get nervous, their hands get sweaty, they're like, can you please hug me, can I please talk to you? So I think that this is, like, really important, even for younger kids, maybe not even just high school, maybe middle school and elementary, because it's a real issue.

JW: Awesome. Alright, this is the one that everybody needs a second to think about. Is there anything that you would like the adults in your life to know about anxiety as a teenager that you're not sure they're always aware of?

Riya: Okay, I think this happens a lot with where...how the parents grew up versus how the children grew up. I think the way that they, the parents grew up will be incredibly different with how children's grow. Children... most parents... my parents came from India, so I'm in America now, I have an entirely different environment, different, you know, culture, different societal understanding of, you know, mental health, so I think the way we battle that is going to be extremely different, based...like, it's not going to be the same as your experience when you grow up, because I know some places, they kind of, you know, hide that, you know, you know, just tough it out, you know? But, I think Gen Z especially is one of the most vocal generations with, um, anxiety and any sort of mental health, so I believe that I want them to know that the way you went through mental health is going to be way different than how another generation will go through mental health, and it's gonna... you can kind of see that in real life.

JW: That makes sense. Is there anything else you wanted to share about music and anxiety that you think is important?

Riya: Hmm...there's a lot. I mean, I...I don't...You said... could you repeat the question really quick?

JW: So, anything else about music and anxiety that you think is important?

Riya: I think it's important that everyone under, like, can pinpoint what emotions they're feeling, because I know some people feel, I'm feeling this emotion, but I don't know what it is, I don't know how to fix it. Or any... or how to calm myself down. So I think it's important that you do some sort of breathing exercise, maybe look at music, see if you're, you know, you get touched by one of the pieces, the lyrics that they entail, and, you know, try to kind of see yourself in that, and see what am I feeling, how can I fix this in the future?

JW: Awesome, that ties right into our next question, because we're going on to emotion. Uh, what was kind of your understanding of emotion before I came?

Riya: Uh, there's many different types. People...express them incredibly differently. You could...I saw that so many times with my friends. The way I express my anger is completely different with how they express their anger. They don't even show it sometimes. I'm like, you're angry? I could never tell. They're just like, yeah, I just battle it internally, and I'm like. should you...I don't know if you...I don't know. I... there's... there... it's incredibly different. People are so interesting, you know? everyone has a different way of expressing it, everyone knows... everyone has a different way of handling it. That's kind of my basis.

JW: Okay. Do you believe that certain emotions are good and certain emotions are bad?

Riya: I think every emotion is important in some way. I know there are some "bad" emotions, but I think those bad emotions if there's no bad... bad emotions, then there's no positive ones, right? So, I think that there's...I think all emotions are important, whether they're bad or good.

JW: That makes sense. Alright, so since I came last week, has the way you think about emotion changed at all?

Riya: Not especially... I think it's...I think last week was a lot more, you know, breathing techniques and calming yourself down. I think emotions kind of stayed the same with me, you know, different ways to handle it, different ways to experience it, things like that.

JW: Okay. So, thinking about when I had you connect your own emotional experience to the music that we were singing, um, describe that was... what that was like for you, connecting your...life experience to the emotion in the song.

Riya: Hmm. So...I am only 14, so I've only had a couple of life experiences to experience, but I was able to, you know, try to pinpoint some of my experiences with the music, and most importantly, the lyrics of it. I think one thing I really noticed was, um, the...how do I explain this? If a song is more bouncy, it's kind of harder for me to put myself in there, because I'm trying to just listen to the music, but when something's more flowy, I am able to put my emotions into it more, because I'm able to think about the lyrics more. I think that kind of shared with the song there, it's pretty...flowy the first time we had (unclear), so I was like...

JW: That makes sense. So, did you find it easy to connect your life to the music, or was it kind of difficult to do?

Riya: I think it was pretty easy, because my life has been music, so it's kind of always just... it's been intertwined. Like, the sound of it.

JW: Alright, so since I was here last week. Have you found yourself, when you're just listening to your own music or singing music, have you found yourself connecting your emotions to songs a little more often than you maybe had before?

Riya: I think it happens more with choir music, because choir has been a really big part of my life, and I think choir actually uses a lot more, more touching lyrics than, you know, just pop or regular music. So with choir music, I can definitely, even with a different language. I always go home and I always look at the translations and, you know, try to see, you know, the emotion that lies behind it, and I think that way I'm able to connect with most of the choir music.

JW: That makes sense. Was there anything about, doing this connecting of the music to your emotions that you found especially helpful?

Riya: I don't know. I think, like I said, I don't think I've been through that many life-altering, different life experiences yet, so there wasn't really anything that stood out to me, but I can say that, you know, I'm... I was able to connect myself with it.

JW: That makes sense. Was there any part of connecting to the music that you found kind of stressful or uncomfortable?

Riya: I don't think stressful at all. I think it was... the whole process was very comfortable for me, since I've been doing that since I was a kid.

JW: Good. Alright, Same as the earlier question about anxiety, but this time about emotions. Is there anything you want the adults in your life to know about how teenagers experience emotions that they may not be aware of?

Riya: I think especially at school, when you're around so many authority figures, when you're around so many adults, I know at school you're...you're kind of...the norm is to, you know, whatever emotion you're feeling, kind of hold it until home. You know, always keep a smile on your face, always be positive, but I think adults should know that, you know, we're still teenagers, and we're still going through, some...our minds are still developing, our bodies are still developing, we're still... we're going through a lot, and then on top of that, we have seven classes, you know, homework, especially at competitive schools, it happens a lot, um, such as this one. So, I think it's important to know that. No matter how...you know. outbursts will happen. When you suppress yourself so much in such a... especially on an 8-hour day at school, it's kind of inevitable to see that happen at some times, and I don't think you should fault the child for it. I think you should, you know, kind of see what, like, what's underlying... what is the issue, kind of. I think that's what's...

JW: Yeah, that makes sense. Okay, awesome. Is there anything else you wanted to share about music and emotion that you think is important?

Riya: I think mu...emotion and music go hand in hand, so I think everyone should try their best to, you know, maybe look at music and try to see if you can pinpoint your emotions that way, just like I said, it is.

JW: Awesome, that was my last question.

Middle School Interviews:

Ryan

JW: Okay, so this is Ryan's interview. Alright, so Ryan, I'm just gonna ask you some questions about anxiety and about the stuff we did a week ago whenever I was here, or, well, more than a week ago, when I was here. So, uh, before I came last time, what was kind of your understanding of anxiety and what anxiety is?

Ryan: Anxiety? So...what I understand... when I heard about anxiety, I did... I think about like...like, stressed or something I guess, like, worrying too much, from before. I sometimes worry too much, like, yeah, like over tests and stuff I guess.

JW: Yeah, that makes sense. So you've experienced anxiety a little bit before.

Ryan: Yeah.

JW: When you've been anxious like that, have you ever used music or any kind of breathing technique to help with it before I came?

Ryan: Yeah.

JW: Like, you used music or breathing? Which one?

Ryan: I used music.

JW: Music? How did you use it?

Ryan: When I would get worried, I just usually just, like, think of a song, a cool song that...I usually just sing in my mind, and that usually just makes me less worried.

JW: That makes perfect sense. Uh, have you ever used anything else to help with your anxiety? Anything besides music or breathing stuff?

Ryan: I just think about... I usually just think about some things that happened in my life that were very fun, and think about stuff that's gonna happen.

JW: Sounds like a cool technique. Alright, so since I was here last time, have you used the box breathing technique, the one I taught that was in for 4, hold for 4, out for 4, hold for 4?

Ryan: Not really.

JW: Not really? Okay. Do you think that you might later, at some point, if you ever feel like you're too stressed out by, like, taking a test or something?

Ryan: Yeah.

JW: yeah. Alright, so then the other one I did that was about anxiety was that technique where I talked through, like, the worst case scenario for a performance, and then the best case scenario, and then we thought about what would be realistic to happen in the performance. You remember that one?

Ryan nods

JW: Okay, uh, so how... do you think that you will feel less anxiety at your next performance if you think through it that way?

Ryan: Yeah.

JW: You think so? Have you tried using that technique just in your daily life, just thinking through what's the worst that could happen, what's the best that could happen, and what's kind of realistic.

Ryan: Uh, yeah I use that.

JW: You used that? Did you use it before I came, or just after I kind of showed it to y'all?

Ryan: Before you came.

JW: Before you came? Yeah, it's a really good technique, you just might not have had words for what it's called. Is there anything about either the box breathing or that other technique about the good and the bad that you found really helpful?

Ryan: Yeah, the good and the bad was really helpful.

JW: Yeah, what did you find helpful about it?

Ryan: Really because it just takes... because if I think about something, that's gonna happen good, and something that's less bad gonna happen, then that usually makes me less worried.

JW: That makes a lot of sense. Do you think that doing these things would be helpful to students in other choirs if their teachers knew how to teach them?

Ryan: Yeah, probably.

JW: Alright, this question had all of the high schoolers kind of really thinking real hard, so this may take a second to think about. Is there anything that you want the adults in your life to know about anxiety the way kids feel anxiety that they might not know about.

pause

JW: I know, I told you, it's one that takes a minute to think about, so anything that you want the adults in your life to know about how kids experience anxiety.

Ryan: Yeah

JW: Alright, what is it?

Ryan: Just that how much...how much stress I had to take, and how much how much worried I am, of them?

JW: Like, worried about your parents, too?

Brock: Yeah, and stress about my siblings.

JW: Yeah, so adults don't necessarily realize how much stress kids are under.

Ryan: Yeah.

JW: That makes sense. Anything else about music and anxiety that you think is important to share?

Ryan: Music and... which one?

JW: About music and anxiety, just like the connection between music and anxiety.

Ryan: I think... I think music help is more... is important for... to help for anxiety, because music... Because whenever I sing some...some, some cool little songs, like, humming it. That usually just makes me less stressed and less worried.

JW: That makes sense. Yeah. Alright, so now we're going to switch to the part about emotions. So, what was your understanding of what emotion is before I came last time?

Ryan: Well, when I heard emotions, I just think about, like, how I'm feeling.

JW: Yeah, that makes perfect sense. Do you think that certain emotions are good emotions or bad emotions, or not really?

Ryan: Certain emotions, they're...they're good.

JW: Okay, so since I came last time, has the way you think about emotion changed at all?

Ryan: Yeah.

JW: Yeah? How has it changed?

Ryan: I used to think that...I think...that it's not good to be have emotions. But then, after when you came, maybe it might be better to have emotions than I think. Because it, like, shows you how you feel.

JW: I like that. It's great. Alright, so when we did the part where we read your music and talked about the lyrics of the music, and you were thinking about your own emotions and your own experience, what was that like for you?

Ryan: When you did that emotions in the song, I just think about, like, I'm never gonna finish this whenever I look at their lyrics. When I saw the lyrics, it looks a bit hard, so I felt like I'm never gonna finish this. But after a few days. Now, after a few days. Before, I used to don't like that music, but after when I hear the lyrics and how it sounds, all I did.

JW: Yeah, that does happen quite a bit. What about when I was here and we did that exercise where I had you think about how your life connects to the emotions? What did you think about that?

Ryan: Like...what emotions did I have in my life?

JW: Yeah, like, emotions you've had in your life, and then we read the song that y'all are singing, and we talked about how you can connect your own emotions about that same thing to the song.

Ryan: Well, that song, it feels like depressing, and towards the end, it feels like a happy ending, yeah, and in my life...I sometimes feel more stressed, and...more bad, because of my siblings, of how much I had to take care of them.

JW: Yeah. Okay. Did you find it kind of easy to connect to the music, or kind of hard?

Ryan: Easy.

JW: Pretty easy?

Ryan: Yeah.

JW: That's good. Alright, so, since I came last time, have you noticed that when you're listening to your own music, or singing music, that you're thinking about how the song lyrics connect to your life more than you did before?

Ryan: Yeah.

JW: Yeah? Do you have any examples of that? Of when you were listening to your own music, and you noticed yourself connecting your life to it?

Ryan: I mean, like...one of the songs...just connects to me about my feelings of... yeah

JW: yeah, that makes sense. Did... is there anything about that one that you found really helpful about connecting the lyrics to the emotions?

Ryan: Yeah.

JW: Yeah? What did you find helpful about it?

Ryan: Oh, because the music. It helps me like...make me less angry, and... and it...and less sad...

JW: yeah, that makes sense. Was there any part of doing that that you found kind of stressful or uncomfortable?

Ryan: No, not really.

JW: No? That's good. Is there anything you... so this is kind of like the question about anxiety. Is there anything you want the adults in your life to know about how kids experience emotions?

Ryan: Yeah, like if I... Yeah, but... Like, how much angrier I'm towards my siblings of what they did. Like how I feel.

JW: Yeah, that can be really tough to deal with. Is there anything else you wanted to share about music and emotion that you think is important?

Ryan: Not really.

JW: Ok, That was my last question. You did great, thank you!

Brock

JW: And so this is Brock's interview. I'm saying it on the recording so I can make sure I label it correctly. Alright, so, uh, the questions I'm going to ask are pretty simple, they're just stuff about anxiety and emotions and the stuff that we did when I was here last time. Make sense?

Brock nods

JW: Okay, so, first question I have for you, what was your understanding of anxiety before I came? Like, what did you know about anxiety?

Brock: Um, It's like, kind of scary. You're like, um, you get very kind of...stuck when you, like, go to, like, a quiz or a test for me. That's about it.

JW: Yeah, so you've experienced some anxiety before?

Brock: yeah.

JW: Yeah. Uh, what was it like when you experienced anxiety?

Brock: I got, like, all tensed up, and I couldn't really...like, sometimes I couldn't think, but, um, most of the time, I got over it.

JW: That's good. So, when you had anxiety, have you ever used music or any other kind of breathing technique to help before I came?

Brock: Yeah.

JW: Yeah. So, what kind of things had you used?

Brock: Before, like, test quizzes, I used to take, like, a deep breath and, like, say something to myself.

JW: Got it. Uh, What are some other things you've done to help with your anxiety?

Brock: Stretch... stretching and listening to music.

JW: Okay. Do you find those pretty helpful?

Brock: Yeah.

JW: That's good. So, since I came last time, have you tried using the box breathing that I taught, the in for 4, hold for 4, out for 4, hold for 4?

Brock: Yeah, sometimes...I did that once on a math test.

JW: Awesome! Did you find it helpful?

Brock: Yeah.

JW: Good.

JW: Alright, so then, moving on to the second thing, when we talked about the good things that can happen in the performance, and the bad things, and what was realistic. Uh, did you find that to be helpful, do you think you'll feel less anxiety?

Brock: Usually during the performances, I don't feel very...

JW: You don't feel anxiety for performances? That's awesome. That probably means you were very prepared. Um, but do you think maybe when y'all go to something like UIL, you might feel less stressed if you use that technique?

Brock: Yeah.

JW: Awesome. That's just, like, the warning bell, right?

Other teacher in room: Yes.

JW: Okay. So...

Other teacher in room: Actually, yeah, it's 9.40 today, because it's advisory, so we have 3 minutes.

JW: Oh, okay. Alright, we'll try to get through this, and if not, I'll make sure he writes you a pass.

Other teacher in room: He will, he will.

JW: Alright, so since...since I came last time, have you tried using that, uh, good things, bad things, realistic things for anything else besides performances?

Brock: Um, not really.

JW: That's okay. Do you think it might be helpful to use it for things other than just performances?

Brock: Yeah, maybe when I'm at baseball practice, or anything that I really do outside of school. Any clubs.

JW: That makes sense. Is there anything about those two things, the box breathing or the other thing, the good-bad technique that you found really helpful?

Brock: Um, yeah, the box method during tests.

JW: (to the teacher at the door, can't hear him beyond mumbling but he is saying he will write Brock a pass to his next class since we were a bit behind schedule) Yeah, that's what we were just saying, thank you.

JW: Uh, alright. Did you finish your answer for that? Sorry.

Brock: Oh, the box method really helps during school. Sometimes, like, if we have, like, a pop quiz, then, like, I'll use that method, because, like, it's the pop quiz, I don't really know it's gonna happen.

JW: Yeah. That makes sense. Uh, do you think that these things, both of those things, could be helpful to students in other choirs if their directors taught it to them?

Brock: Yes.

JW: You think so, why do you think it would help them?

Brock: It would help them because it not only helps them in choir anxiety, it also helps them outside of school or in school, not just in the choir.

JW: Yeah, that makes sense. Alright, this is the tricky question. Uh, all... even all the high schoolers had to think about it for a minute. Is there anything that you want me or any adults in your life to know about anxiety and what it's like for kids?

short pause

Brock: Some kids really don't tell that they have anxiety, but they actually do have anxiety, and, like, then they don't show it, because they don't want to, like, be embarrassed or anything.

JW: absolutely understand, that's a really good... that's a really good insight.

Brock: Yeah

JW: That makes a lot of sense. Is there anything else you wanted to share about music and anxiety that you think is important?

Brock: Hmm, not really, because I really don't have any, anxiety during like music, because, like, music really calms me.

JW: That makes sense. So, really, what you want to share is that music helps with anxiety instead of making it worse.

Brock: Yeah

JW: That makes sense. Alright, so switching to emotion. What did you understand about emotion before I came, like, experiencing emotions, or what did you know about emotion in general?

pause Like, what is emotion?

Brock: Oh, like, the act of like, what your body is, like, feeling?

JW: Do you feel like some emotions are good and some are bad?

Brock: Yeah.

JW: Yeah. So since I was here last time, has the way you think about emotion changed at all?

Brock: Hmm. *pause* Not really.

JW: Okay, that is totally fair. Alright, so now thinking about when I had y'all think about your own experience while we were singing the music. And, like, thinking about what you've experienced emotionally while we were reading the song lyrics. Uh, what was that like for you?

Brock: It was, like, kind of easy, and I was, like, thinking, like, it was, like, really fun, too, like, my emotions were, like, happy, but, like, because, like, it was, like, having fun with all your friends while doing, like, the singing. Yeah.

JW: Yeah. So you enjoyed it, you found it pretty easy to do that exercise

Brock nods

JW: so... alright, so since I came last time, have you noticed when you're listening to or singing your own music, have you noticed that you're thinking about how your life and your emotions connect to those songs more?

Brock: Not really. I haven't been, like, connecting my life to the songs, but I usually just like seeing them, and then, like, if anything comes across, then maybe, but I don't usually...

JW: Okay, so not, like, actively doing it,

Brock: yeah

JW: but sometimes if something comes up that's really relatable,

Brock: yeah

JW: that makes sense. So, was there anything about doing that one that you found especially helpful?

Brock: *pause* I'm trying to think.

JW: Like, do you think it might be helpful, just maybe not right now?

Brock: Yeah.

JW: Was there any part of doing this that you found kind of stressful?

Brock shakes head no

JW: Okay.

JW: One of the last things. Is there anything you want the adults in your life to know about emotions for kids that they might not know about?

Brock: Hmm... Sometimes, it's like, if... kids are going through a lot of emotions, they'll, like, show it, but it's not because, like, they're being in a bad way, they're trying to, like, actually say... they're trying to tell that, something bad is happening, but they don't really want to tell their parents about it so...

JW: Oh, yeah, that makes a lot of sense. Anything else you want to share about music and emotion that you think is important?

Brock: Not really

JW: Okay, awesome. All right, that was my last question, so we'll walk over and get you your pass. Let me stop the recording. Thank you so much for doing this.

James (note – James is an English language learner with limited proficiency)

JW: Alright, and this is James' interview. All I'm gonna ask today is just some questions about anxiety, some questions about emotions, and the stuff we did last time I was here, does that make sense?

James: Mmhmm

JW: Okay, so the first question is just, what was your understanding of anxiety before I came? Like, what do you know about what anxiety is?

James: I don't know.

JW: You don't know what anxiety is?

James: How to explain.

JW: Oh, okay. Have you ever experienced anxiety?

James: *pause* uhh

JW: No? You don't have, like, feelings of stress or anything like that?

(at this point I recognized how significant the language barrier was, and realized I needed to simplify my language and try to find ways he could understand)

James: Sometimes.

JW: Sometimes. What does that feel like when you feel stressed out?

James: Um *long pause* Sad.

JW: Kinda sad? Okay. When you've experienced that kind of feeling sad or stressed out, have you ever used music or any kind of breathing to help?

James: Uh, Sometime I play music or, playing video game or playing.

JW: Okay, yeah, that's a great way to help. Does that work and help you feel less stressed out?

James: Yeah.

JW: That's good. Alright, so since I came last time, have you tried using the box breathing I taught y'all, the in for 4, hold for 4, out for 4, hold for 4 breathing? Have you tried that at all since I came?

James shakes head no

JW: No, you haven't really felt any stress that you needed to do it with?

James shakes head no

JW: No? Okay. So then the other one I did, which was where we talked about the good things that could happen, and the bad things that could happen, and what's realistically gonna happen at your next performance. Do you remember us doing that? Where I talked about, like, at a performance. What's the best that it could go, and what's the worst that it could go?

James shakes head no

JW: You don't remember us talking about that. Do you think that doing something like that could help you be a little less stressed out about a performance, if you think about what's realistic about what could happen?

James: I don't know.

JW: You don't know, that's alright. Um, let's see... So do you think that learning how to do these things about anxiety could help other students in other choirs if they learned them?

James: Yeah.

JW: Yeah. Uh, is there anything... this is kind of a tricky question, so you might need to think for a minute. Is there anything you want the adults in your life to know about anxiety for kids, about, like, how kids feel when they're stressed out.

James: Yeah

JW: Yeah, what kind of things do you want them to know?

James: What help them

JW: What kind of things do you want them to know help?

James: use space.

JW: Like, giving you space?

James: Yeah.

JW: That makes sense. Is there anything else you wanted to share about music and anxiety?

James: No.

JW: No? Okay. Alright, so switching over to the part about emotions. What did you know about emotion, and what emotion is before I came?

James: Normal.

JW: Normal? Like, what do you think emotions are?

James shrugs

JW: You don't know? Like, do you, uh, what about if I call them feelings? Does that make more sense? So what do you know about, like, having feelings?

James: I don't know.

JW: You don't know? That's all right. Do you think that feeling certain ways is good or bad? Like, feeling happy is good, or anything like that?

James: Yeah.

JW: Yeah. Do you think any types of feelings are bad?

James: Like stress, sad, right?

JW: Like, stress and sadness? Okay. Uh, since I came last time, has the way you thought about feelings changed at all?

James shakes head no

JW: No, that's okay. So, thinking about... Do you remember when I came in and we talked about the lyrics of the song you're singing? And I had y'all think about what, uh, what you've experienced that's similar to the song. Do you remember me doing that?

James: No.

JW: No? Okay. So, when I did that, I had y'all think about what... Like, how you can connect to the song from your own experiences. Do you think doing something like that might...uh, be helpful. Like, connecting your own life to the emotion in the song? The feelings in the song.

James: Yeah.

JW: Yeah. Do you think it would be kind of...easy to do, or kind of difficult?

James: Um, kind of easy.

JW: Pretty easy. Okay. So, since I came last time, have you noticed when you're listening to your own music, or singing your own music, that you're thinking about how your life connects to the songs?

James: No.

JW: Not really? That's alright. Let me see...is there anything else you want the adults in your life to know about emotions that kids feel, or the way that kids are feeling?

James nods

JW: Yeah? What kind of things?

James: I don't know.

JW: You don't know... you do want them to know things, but you're not sure how to put it into words?

James: Yeah.

JW: Think if I can figure out a better way to...say it. So, when you're feeling certain types of ways, do you feel like it's hard to tell the adults in your life how you're feeling?

James: Sometime.

JW: Do you feel like, uh, they don't really understand how you're feeling sometimes.

James: Uh, Yes sometimes.

JW: Alright. Alright, is there anything else about music and feelings that you think is important?

James: Uh, music help feel better when you stress.

JW: Music helps you feel better when you're stressed, that makes sense, yeah, awesome. Alright, that was my last question. Thank you so much, and you can go back out and join your friends.

Alan

JW: Alright, so this is Alan's interview. Alright, so we're just... I'm just gonna ask you a few questions about anxiety, and about emotions, and about the stuff that we did last time that I was here. Does that make sense?

Alan: Yeah, that makes sense.

JW: Okay, so first question is just, what was your understanding of anxiety before I came last time? Like, what did you know about anxiety?

Alan: Anxiety was, like, the fear of upcoming things. Such as, like, what's gonna happen in the future?

JW: Okay, yeah, that's a... that's a good answer. Have you experienced anxiety before? Like, do you feel like you've had anxiety before?

Alan: Yeah.

JW: Yeah. What is it like when you experience anxiety?

Alan: It's just, like, random feelings going on, and thoughts going on in your mind.

JW: Oh, okay, that's a really cool way to describe it. So when you've experienced anxiety before, have you ever used music or any kind of breathing technique to help you with it?

Alan: Yeah, I just, like, sang songs that I like, and... And, like, read a book or something.

JW: Oh, okay, yeah, that could be really helpful, too. Do you find those things to be helpful for your anxiety?

Alan: Yeah, I find them helpful.

JW: Okay, so since I came last time. Have you used the box breathing, the breathe in for 4, hold for 4, out for 4, hold for 4?

Alan: Yeah, a little.

JW: A little? What did you use it for?

Alan: Like, just to handle my sadness and anger sometimes.

JW: Oh, did you feel like it helped?

Alan: Yeah, it felt... it helped.

JW: Good. All right. So then the second thing I did was the technique where I talked about, like, the worst case scenario, or the best case, or what's realistic for a performance. You remember doing that one?

Alan: Yeah.

JW: Do you feel like that was helpful, and you might have less anxiety the next time you perform because of doing that?

Alan: Yeah.

JW: Yeah. Um, Do you think that... can you think of anything else in your life you might use that idea for, of, like, thinking best case, or worst case, or realistic?

Alan: Like, when I'm performing, or, like, trying something new.

JW: Just when you're trying something new, that makes sense. Have you tried to do that at all since I came, or not yet?

Alan: Not yet. It's worked a little...

JW: So is there anything about those two interventions, the box breathing or the best-case, worst-case technique that you found really helpful?

Alan: I found, like, the best case, worst case really helpful, because, like, it helped me, like, move back to reality, rather than just going on... off into my own world.

JW: That makes a lot of sense, yeah. Do you think that learning those interventions could be helpful to kids in other choirs if their teachers knew how to do it?

Alan: Yeah, I feel like that would be really helpful.

JW: Ok. Why do you think it would be helpful to other choir kids?

Alan: Because the choir's a really relaxing place to be, and, like, I can get the... Performances in front of, like, 100 people or so can be, like, really... overwhelming and nervous, and you can be filled with anxiety, but the box breathing and the best case, worst case scenario, things really help you come back to reality and, like, not worry about it since your friends are also there, and your... other choir kids.

JW: Awesome, that makes sense. Uh, So this question always makes people need a minute to think, so that is okay. But, is there anything you want the adults in your life to know about anxiety and what it's like for kids.

Alan: Uhh, I just really want them to know that, like, it's a lot to go through. And, like, you gotta give us some time to understand and, like, get back to reality with these techniques.

JW: Yeah, that makes sense. Do you feel like the adults in your life don't always really understand how kids experience anxiety?

Alan: Yeah, a little.

JW: A little bit. Alright, is there anything else about music and anxiety that you think is important?

Alan: No.

JW: Okay, so we're gonna switch over to the part about emotions, cause that was the last thing we did, was talking about emotions when I was here. So what was kind of your understanding of emotion before I came last time?

Alan: Emotion was just, like, a feeling that you felt in your brain.

JW: Okay. Do you feel like some emotions are good and some are bad?

Alan: I believe that all emotions are good, because, like, one can't survive without the other, and, like, each one's important for your life.

JW: Oh.

Alan: Because happiness... like, sadness can help you realize what's... even though you're happy, like, what's... what's not the right thing to do? And sadness... and happiness can help you realize that sadness is not the right thing to do at that mo... particular moment, so yeah.

JW: Okay, so it kind of helps you understand, like, that makes a lot of sense.

Alan: That helps each other out.

JW: Yeah, I like that way of looking at it, that's really cool. So since I came last time, has the way you thought about emotion changed at all?

Alan: Uh, No, not really.

JW: Okay. So... I want you to... thinking about when I came and we talked about thinking about your own experiences while we were reading the song, the lyrics. Do you remember doing that?

Alan: Yeah.

JW: What was that like for you, trying to connect your own experiences to the song lyrics?

Alan: It just, like, bring me back to my roots and, like, what I think of myself as a human and a person.

JW: Oh, very cool. Did you find it kind of easy to do, or kind of difficult to connect your life to the music?

Alan: It felt kind of easy to do, because I knew where I came from, and like, who am I as a person.

JW: Awesome. When you're listening to your own music, or singing your own music, have you noticed, since I came and showed y'all how to do that, that you're connecting your own emotions to songs a little more in your own life?

Alan: Um yeah.

JW: Yeah. Do you have any examples of how you did that?

Alan: What, can you repeat the...?

JW: So, like, when, when you are listening to your own music, do you notice that you're connecting your own experiences to the music you're listening to?

Alan: Yeah, I realize that, but sometimes I don't...

JW: Sometimes you don't.

Alan: Just kind of depends on the song.

JW: Yeah. That makes sense. So did you find anything about doing that helpful?

Alan: Yeah, I found it helpful to, like, understand the song and put, like, more emotion into it. Like, what emotion I need to put in.

JW: Oh, like, so how you're gonna perform it?

Alan: Yeah.

JW: That makes a lot of sense. Um, Is there any part of doing that that you found kind of stressful or uncomfortable?

Alan: No.

JW: No? Alright, Is there anything you want the adults in your life to know about emotions, and how kids experience emotions?

Alan shakes head no

JW: No? Alright, anything else about music and emotion that you think is important?

Alan: I think that, like, music can really help you ease your emotions and find out, like, Is this the right thing to do or not?

JW: So, like, help you make decisions.

Alan: Yeah, and guide you in life.

JW: I like that. That makes a lot of sense. That was my last question. Awesome. You had some really good answers.

Penelope

JW: So all I'm going to ask you is just some questions about anxiety, and some questions about uh, emotions, and about the stuff that we did last time I was here. If you would move just a little closer, you don't have to be on screen, but just to make sure that it picks up your voice. Oh, and this is Penelope's interview, so that I remember to... put that in there, just in case they get mixed up. Which they shouldn't, they're time stamped. Alright, uh, so, first question's an easy one. Uh, what was your understanding about what anxiety is before I came?

Penelope: Well, I always thought that anxiety was like... feeling of, like, nervousness or, like... Not having, like, confidence or something, you know?

JW: Mm-hmm. Okay, do you feel like you have experienced anxiety before yourself?

Penelope: Yeah a little

JW: Yeah. Uh, what does that feel like for you when you have anxiety?

Penelope: When I have anxiety, it's almost like... it's almost like my brain just never stops moving, and I'm like, my legs are just like this, and I'm constantly, like, worried of, like, what's gonna happen.

JW: I feel it the same way, so that's a really good way of describing it. Uh, so when you've experienced anxiety before, have you ever used music or any kind of breathing technique to help you before I came?

Penelope: I mean, not really.

JW: Not really. Uh, so what are some other things you have done to help with your anxiety?

Penelope: Um, usually, before you came. I don't know, I usually just, like... I just tried to, like, meditate, but that didn't work, because I had no idea what I was doing, so yeah.

JW: Yeah, that is totally fair. It can be kind of tricky to do. So, since I came last time, have you tried using the box breathing technique I taught you the in for 4...?

Penelope: Yes, I used it this morning. Test.

JW: Awesome! How did it go?

Penelope: Tested the box breathing to help the anxiety.

JW: Awesome, so you just...even if you didn't necessarily do any better than you would have, at least you felt better.

Penelope: Yeah.

JW: That makes sense. Awesome. I'm glad it helped. Okay, so moving to the next thing we did, which was the worst case scenario, best-case scenario, what's realistically gonna happen? Do you feel like that was helpful and might help you feel less anxiety at your next performance?

Penelope: Yeah, I think that will help.

JW: Okay. Have you noticed yourself using that kind of thinking in anything else in your daily life that's stressing you out?

Penelope: Yeah, I've used it a lot, like, on, like, volleyball and stuff, you know, because I'm always scared that, like, I'll never get to playing time, and I know that's unrealistic since I'm starting, so, you know. JW: Yeah, so, so did you find it helpful when you used that technique to think through it?

Penelope: Yeah.

JW: Awesome. So, is there anything about those two interventions that you found especially helpful?

Penelope: I really like, for the second one, I really liked how, how it, like, like, brought me back to, like, reality, because I know that, like, I won't, like, get a zero on this test. I'll probably get at least a 70, you know? It brought me back to reality, which was good, and the box breathing, it was good. It really helped, like, calm me down and stuff.

JW: That's awesome. Um, Do you think that these anxiety interventions could be helpful to students in other choirs, if their choir directors knew how to kind of teach them?

Penelope: Yeah.

JW: Yeah, why do you think they would be helpful?

Penelope: Because... everybody leads a pretty similar life, and, you know, I think that... I think that, since it helped me a bunch, I think that it would definitely help kids like me, you know?

JW: Yeah, awesome. Alright, this is the one that everybody needs a second to think about, so it's okay if you need a second. Is there anything that you want the adults in your life To know about how kids experience anxiety that they may not realize.

Penelope: I think that... I think that the adults, they need to realize that, like...the anxiety, like, once we... since when... my mind is, like, constantly moving, I can't just, like, shut it off like that. I need, like...like, constant reminders to, like, oh yeah, calm down, hey, hey, let's think about something fun this weekend, or, like, I just need constant reminders, you know? But, like, it doesn't happen just by telling me once. So yeah.

JW: That makes a lot of sense, so kind of some time to chill out, but also...Being more consistent about reminding you what's happening.

Penelope: Yeah.

JW: Makes sense. Alright, is there anything else you wanted to share about music and anxiety that you think is important?

Penelope: I think that the music definitely helps with my anxiety, because, like, I think that now, whenever I listen to... whenever I'm, like, stressed and, like, my brain can't, like, stop moving, I think that the music is really helpful, because it helps me, like, calm down, you know?

So I can just sing and, like, forget all about my troubles, let all my troubles drift away.

JW: Yeah, that's awesome, that makes sense. All right, so switching over to the parts about emotion, what was your overall understanding of emotion before I came last time?

Penelope: I just thought that an emotion was, like, was just a feeling that you had.

JW: Okay. Do you feel like certain emotions are good or bad?

Penelope: Yeah.

JW: Yeah. So since I came last, has the way you think about emotion changed at all?

Penelope: Yeah, I think it's made me think about emotions, like, a little bit, like, deeper. Like, anger does not just equal bad, and happiness doesn't just equal good, you know, like, there's, like, deeper meaning.

JW: Yeah. Awesome. Alright, so thinking about the exercise I had y'all do, where you're thinking about your own emotional experience while looking at the song lyrics, and thinking about what you've experienced while list... while like, reading the song. What was that experience like for you?

Penelope: That experience was...it really got me to think deeper, because if that was just a normal song, I would have just... I would have... if that was a song we were singing, I would have just sang it with no problem, without ever, like, truly, like, I don't know, getting to read it and have time to, like, go through it, you know? But this definitely helped, and now I have, Now I... now I can, like, know the meanings to my songs and, like, actually understand what I'm saying, which is good.

JW: Yeah, that's awesome. Did you find it easy to connect, or kind of difficult to kind of...

Penelope: It was kind of rather difficult, but I got there.

JW: Okay. So even though you found it kind of difficult, was it worth feeling a little uncomfortable?

Penelope: Definitely, because now I look at all my music differently.

JW: Awesome. So that leads right to my next question. So, since I came, have you noticed yourself when you're listening to your own music, or singing the other music in choir, do you find yourself relating your own emotions to that song more?

Penelope: Mm-hmm.

JW: Awesome. Do you have any examples of doing that?

Penelope: Well, let's think...The, the Regina (a choir song they are singing) is talking about, like, the queen of the world and stuff? So, I thought about that, and you know, it's a song, we're talking about, like, Well, hold on for a minute, it is a different...All of our songs are in different languages, so it's kind of hard to, like, remember, like, off the top of your head...but...the...the the

JW: Yeah, no, you take your time.

Penelope: The La Vie that we're doing in mixed choir, that one. It's kind of just, like, it's really... Ms. Jordan explained it, and how it's, like, a really, like, exciting song, and we're, like, celebrating everything. And so whenever I sing that song, I always feel, like, a little bit happier, because now Ms. Jordan explained that one, and I understand the deeper meaning, you know?

JW: Oh yeah, awesome. So, is there anything about doing this particular exercise that you found especially helpful?

Penelope: I think... I think the exercises that we did at the beginning were really good. Like, the thinking of the worst case scenario, and then the box breathing, I think that was...Best part.

JW: Awesome. Did you find anything about the emotion regulation one stressful or uncomfortable?

Penelope: Well, at first, I was like, it's, like, it's kind of hard for me to think of my emotions, because I thought of them as, like, sad, happy, angry, I don't know, those ones, I guess. So...like, it was kind of difficult for me because I didn't necessarily know where the song was going in the first place, but then I, like, I understood it more, so yeah.

JW: Awesome. Alright, so same as the anxiety question earlier, is there anything you want the adults in your life to know about emotions and how kids your age experience them?

Penelope: I think they should learn from my mistake and know that happiness isn't just, like, there's not only happy, sad, and angry, there's a lot more, especially for middle school girls.
Drama.

JW: Absolutely. Is there anything else you wanted to share about music and emotion that you think is important?

Penelope: I think that... Sometimes it can be confusing, because there can be, like, a rock song that's, like, a headbanger, and then it'll be about losing the person you love most, and then it's like, what? But, like, there are some... there are some good songs out there that really connect really well.

JW: Yeah, awesome. And that was my last question, so awesome!

Sarai

JW: Okay. So, all I'm gonna ask you today, and this is Sarai's interview. All I'm going to ask you is some questions about anxiety, some questions about emotions, And some questions about the stuff that I did last time I was here, okay?

Sarai nods

JW: Alright, so first question is just, what was your understanding of anxiety before I came last time? Like, what did you know about anxiety?

Sarai: Um... it... Usually distracted me from thinking straight. I couldn't like clear my mind and stuff.

JW: Okay, so you've experienced anxiety. What... what does that kind of feel like when you experience it?

Sarai: Um... Like a distractment, and then... It makes me lose focus.

JW: Okay, so when you've experienced anxiety, have you ever used music or any kind of breathing technique before I came last?

Sarai: No.

JW: Okay, uh, what are some other things you have done to help with your anxiety?

Sarai: Just... In my mind. So, like, clear my mind, too.

JW: Okay, uh, does that seem to help?

Sarai: Sometimes

JW: Sometimes, alright. So, since I came last time. Have you used the box breathing technique at all, the in for 4, hold for 4 out and 4?

Sarai: Yes (kind of overlapped her yes with the end of my question).

JW: Yeah. Did you feel like it was helpful?

Sarai: Yeah.

JW: You did? Good. Uh, then after that, the second one that I did was... talk to y'all through, like, worst case scenario, best-case scenario, and what's realistically probably going to happen about a performance. Did you feel like that was helpful, and do you think you might have less anxiety at a performance after doing that?

Sarai: That did help a bit. I mean, I think when I have, like, less anxiety.

JW: Yeah. Uh, have you thought about... Or have you used that in any other situation, since I taught you that, thinking about, like, What's the worst that could happen? What's the best that could happen? What's realistically gonna happen?

Sarai: Yeah, I do that sometimes like during exams.

JW: Awesome. Uh, do you find that helpful?

Sarai: Yeah.

JW: yeah, that kind of helps. What do you feel like it helps with?

Sarai: Like, helps me, like, gain control, instead of, like, having millions of thoughts in my mind and stuff.

JW: Awesome. Alright, so those two interventions specifically, is there anything about them that you found especially helpful?

Sarai shrugs

JW: That's alright. Um, do you think that these anxiety interventions could be helpful to students in other choirs if their teachers knew how to teach them?

Sarai: Yeah.

JW: Okay. Uh, why do you think that would be helpful?

Sarai: Because, like, during performances, when they're...being anxious all the time, they'll be...

Singing quietly, the audience will not hear them and stuff.

JW: So you think it'll help with their musical performance?

Sarai: And like being confident.

JW: Awesome. Um, is the... okay, so this is the question that everybody needs a second to think about. Is there anything that you want the adults in your life to know about anxiety that you think they might not know about, like, how kids experience anxiety.

Sarai pauses

JW: Okay, yeah, like I said, this one's a tricky one.

Sarai: Can you say that again?

JW: So, is there anything you want the adults in your life to know about how kids experience anxiety.

Sarai: Well... I mean, like, some adults Don't take it seriously and just say. Stop being a baby and just get over it. So like they need to understand that it's not something you can just forget about.

And, like, you need to help them overcome.

JW: Is there anything else you wanted to share about music and anxiety that you think is important?

Sarai shakes head

JW: No, okay. So now, switching over to when we were talking about emotions. Double check that. Okay, I did record. I was like, I know I have, but... Okay, uh, so thinking about emotions...

What was kind of your understanding of emotion in general before I came?

Sarai: I was pretty sensitive about Emotions. I try to push them away...a lot of times.

JW: Yeah, do you feel like certain emotions are good, or bad, or... Anything like that?

Sarai: Good, good.

JW: So, since I came last, has the way you think about emotion changed at all?

Sarai: A little.

JW: A little, how would you say it's changed?

Sarai: It's hard to put into words.

JW: That's okay. Um, let me see if I can ask that a different way that might help you put it into words. Um, do you feel like you see emotions differently now than you did before?

Sarai: Yeah, I don't... think they're a waste of time. Usually, like, don't let myself feel them?

Because, like, usually I push them aside and stuff.

JW: Oh, okay. Awesome. Um, so when we were doing the exercise about connecting your emotions to the music we were singing. Uh, what was that like for you?

Sarai: Um, it did help me sound more emotional in the song, instead of being all flat. Tiger Tiger, burning brightly (said with emotion, these are lyrics from the song I talked through with them).

JW: *smiles and chuckles* That makes sense. Uh, did you find it easy to connect your life to the music, or kind of difficult?

Sarai: Pretty easy.

JW: Pretty easy. Um, so since I came last, have you noticed that when you're listening to your own music or singing other choir music, Have you noticed yourself thinking about your emotions and thinking about the emotions in the song more?

Sarai: Yeah a lot.

JW: Yeah, um... Do you have any examples of how you've been connecting your own emotions to the songs?

Sarai: In The Tiger... It's a mix of fear and, like...awe. Uh, like little bit of anxiety so. Those must have connected to Tiger, so...

JW: Awesome. Uh, is there anything about doing this exercise that you found especially helpful?

Sarai: A lot, but if I can't specifically name...

JW: Yeah. So, just kind of all the stuff you've already said about how it helped you, kind of recognize your own emotions and connect to them.

Sarai: Yeah.

JW: Okay. Uh, was there any part of this technique of connecting your emotions to the song that you found kind of stressful and uncomfortable?

Sarai: No

JW: No, okay. Alright, so kind of the same as the anxiety question earlier. Is there anything you want the adults in your life to know about how kids experience emotions?

Sarai: Um, I want to know that you can't just... ignore... teenage hormones. They just say it's a distraction, and they're overreacting.

JW: Hmm, that's fair. Uh, is there anything else you wanted to share about music and emotion that you think is important?

Sarai: I don't think you should push them inside. Let yourself feel emotions fully, Good or bad?

JW: Mmmhmm, That makes sense. Alright, that was my last question.

Chelsea

JW: Alright, so this is Chelsea's interview. So all I'm going to ask you today are some questions about...Anxiety, about emotion, and about what did last time I was here.

JW: Okay? So the very first question is just what was your overall understanding of anxiety before I came? Like, what do you know about anxiety?

Chelsea: Like, when you feel nervous.

JW: Uh, do you feel like you personally have experienced anxiety before?

Chelsea nods

JW: Uh, what does it feel like when you've... Got anxiety.

Chelsea: I don't know what to do, it's like...my mind goes away.

JW: Okay, so when you have experienced anxiety before, have you ever used music or any kind of breathing technique to help with it before I came?

Chelsea: Kind of, yes. Mm-hmm.

JW: Uh, what kind of things did you do?

Chelsea: Breathe in and out, try to think of something else.

JW: Okay. Uh, what about anything else besides music or breathing that you've used to help with anxiety?

Chelsea: I try to tell my friends and parents.

JW: Mmm, so talk to someone, talk it out.

Chelsea nods

Uh, do you feel like that helps?

Chelsea nods

JW: So, since I came last time. Have you used the box breathing technique, the in 4, hold for 4, out for 4? Have you tried it in your regular life?

Chelsea: Not recently.

JW: Not recently. Okay. Do you feel like, at some point, even if you haven't used it yet, you might, if you find yourself in a stressful situation?

Chelsea: Yes.

JW: Okay, great. Um, so since I came last time. Uh, the other thing that we learned was the, um... Worst case scenario, best case scenario, reality of the situation, you remember that one?

Chelsea nods

JW: Um, do you think that... That will... give you less anxiety about your next performance, if you think through it using that.

Chelsea: Yeah,

JW: Yes. Um... Um... Sorry, I'm asking my questions out of order. My brain is tired now.

other teacher in the room laughs

JW: Uh, have you noticed yourself using that same kind of thought process in anything else in your daily life?

Chelsea: No

JW: No, okay. Do you think that you might use it for other things if you find yourself really stressed out about them?

Chelsea: For sure.

JW: Okay. Uh, what about it do you think you'll find helpful in those stressful situations?

Chelsea: Like, instead of trying to think of the worst always, I can always think of the positive. And which is probably most likely.

JW: Okay, I like that. Uh, is there anything about those two. Uh, techniques that you found especially helpful.

Chelsea: Listing out just negative or positive outcomes of the situation.

JW: Okay. Do you think that... these anxiety interventions could help students in other choirs if their directors knew how to teach them.

Chelsea: Yes.

JW: You think so? Uh, why do you think they would help?

Chelsea: Those kids are young and they get nervous a lot, and if they're taught that they can think of something else, then it might help them.

JW: Awesome, I love that. Uh... Okay, so this is the question that... Everybody needs a minute to think about. Is there anything that you want the adults in your life to know about anxiety and how kids experience anxiety.

Chelsea: Try to give some time. But don't give too much, because sometimes they'll feel sad. And they do need help and guidance from an adult.

JW: Okay, so kind of recognizing when someone needs space and when someone needs Help. That makes sense. Is there anything else you wanted to share about music and anxiety that you think is important?

Chelsea shakes head no

JW: So now, switching over to thinking about emotions. What was your understanding of emotion, just in general, before I came last time.

Chelsea: Like, a feeling that you can experience in different situations.

JW: Okay. Uh, do you believe that certain emotions are good or bad?

Chelsea nods yes

JW:Uh, since I came last time, has the way you think about emotion changed at all?

Chelsea: Mm-mm.

JW: Okay. So, thinking about when I had you connect Your own emotional experience to the music you are singing. Uh, what was that exercise like for you?

Chelsea: I didn't do it that much.

JW: Okay. Uh, did you find it kind of easy to connect your emotions with the song, or kind of difficult?

Chelsea: Difficult.

JW: Yeah. That's fair. I think the song that y'all had was a little bit on the trickier side for that Exercise. So... Uh, what about with other music? So, when you've been listening to other music or singing other music in choir. Have you found yourself thinking about the emotions in your song connecting to your own emotions since then?

Chelsea: no

JW: No, okay. Uh, is there anything about that intervention that you found helpful?

Chelsea: It can get you to the moment to sing. So you don't sound, like, bland, you can... emotion through your words.

JW: Okay, so you feel like it could be helpful just to... for the performance aspect of it?

Chelsea nods

JW: Makes sense. Uh, was there any part of that, Uh, exercise that you found kind of... stressful or uncomfortable.

Chelsea: Mm-mm

JW: Okay. Uh, is there anything that you want the adults in your life to know about emotions, or how kids experience emotions?

Chelsea: Mmm...No.

JW: Okay. Uh, anything else you can think of that you want to share about music and emotion?

Chelsea shakes head

No? Okay. That was my last question, so awesome.

Aaliyah

JW: Alright, so I am ju- I'm doing Aaliyah's interview, and I am just gonna ask you a couple questions about anxiety, about emotions, and about the stuff we did last time I was here, okay?

Alright, so what was your understanding of anxiety, just in general, before I came last time?

Aaliyah: Like, my definition of it?

JW: Mmhmm

Aaliyah: Like, when you get really nervous and, like, start...like, thinking of a lot of bad things that could happen.

JW: Okay. Do you feel like you've personally experienced anxiety before?

Aaliyah: Like, sometimes.

JW: Okay. What was it like when you experienced it?

Aaliyah: I get, like, really scared, and I start, like, imagining scenarios in my head.

JW: Mmm, okay. When you've experienced anxiety, have you ever used music or any kind of breathing techniques before I came?

Aaliyah: I definitely listen to music a lot.

JW: Awesome. Do you feel like that helped?

Aaliyah: Mmm *nods*

JW: What are some other things you've done before to help with your anxiety?

Aaliyah: Just, like, doing anything to take my mind off of it, like, taking a break and doing something else.

JW: Okay.

Aaliyah: Or, like, talking to my friends a lot helps.

JW: Awesome. And you feel like those things help a lot?

Aaliyah: Mmhmm

JW: Okay. So, since I came last time, have you used the box breathing that I taught y'all, the in for 4, hold for 4, out for 4?

Aaliyah: I used to, when I got really, like, nervous for this upcoming test that I had, and it worked, because I didn't do too bad on the test, like, I got, like, a mark that I wanted, and...Like, I calmed down before the test happened.

JW: That's awesome! That's great to know that it helped. Then the other thing that I did, which was the best case scenario, worst case scenario, what's realistically gonna happen? Uh...did you feel like that one was helpful?

Aaliyah: Uh, definitely, because I know, like, every time I do something, like, it's most probably not gonna go that bad, like, what I imagine it will, so it helped me, like, actually see reality instead of making all those fake scenarios in my head.

JW: Awesome. Do you think you'll feel less anxiety at your next performance if you use that to help you?

Aaliyah: I think so.

JW: So, have you noticed yourself using that kind of thought process in other things in your life besides performances?

Aaliyah: When I went, like, recently for my next martial arts test up, I got, like, really nervous, because it was my first test up without my best friend, because she was testing on the day that was my dog's birthday, so I had to test the day before, and I got really scared without her. Because I'd known her for, like, a really long time, and so, like, I kind of used, like, kind of, like, the scenarios that you taught us to, like, calm down, and know that I had, like, other people that supported me there still...

JW: Awesome, I love that. Is there anything particular about those two interventions that you found especially helpful, either the breathing technique or the best case, worst case?

Aaliyah: I found it, like, really helpful, like, cause for me, I imagine things, like, a lot, like...the worst possible thing that could happen. So, like, I really like the scenario where you could, like, see the best thing and the worst thing, because it helped me see what could actually happen instead of, like, making up all the big things that never really could happen.

JW: That makes sense. Do you think that these two anxiety interventions could be helpful to students in other choirs if their teachers knew how to teach them?

Aaliyah: Definitely.

JW: Why do you think they would help?

Aaliyah: Because I know a lot of other kids my age struggle with anxiety and stuff, and they don't really know how to, like, feel their emotions, and they don't know how to control them, and this could help them find a way to control their emotions.

JW: That makes sense. This one is the tricky question that everyone needs a minute to think about. Is there anything that you want the adults in your life to know about anxiety and how kids feel anxiety?

Aaliyah: I feel like I just want, like, some adults to be more understanding, and, like, give kids a minute, because sometimes, like, they experience, like, really bad anxiety, or they, like, have the same feelings that the same adults could feel, and they don't really realize that a kid could feel that, too. So maybe just, like, being more understanding.

JW: Awesome, I like that. Is there anything else you wanted to share about music and anxiety that you think is important?

Aaliyah: I just think it's important, like, because I grew up in a family, like, and we all love music, so music always has been, like, associated to a good thing for me, so I feel like anytime I'm in trouble, music, like, listening to music really helps.

JW: Awesome. Alright, switching over to emotions. What was kind of your understanding of what emotion is before I came a week ago?

Aaliyah: I think it's just something that you feel when you get, like, happy, sad, mad, like, different things that your body feels in certain scenarios.

JW: Okay. Do you feel like some emotions are good and some are bad?

Aaliyah: Yeah, pretty much.

JW: So since I was here, has the way you thought about emotion changed at all?

Aaliyah: Yes, because now I think, like. Better about certain emotions and, like, better about certain scenarios instead of, like. Like, thinking poorly of, like, most of them.

JW: Makes sense. So, thinking about when I had you connect your own emotional experience to the music y'all are singing. What... what was that exercise like for you?

Aaliyah: I didn't really know how to, like, feel about it, because it's definitely different, something I did before. And also, choir songs that we sing here are not, like, songs that, like, kids my age should listen to on a daily basis, so I've never really thought about connecting that, like, emotionally. Because, like, I've never really, like. Known how to, like, feel those type of songs.

JW: Yeah, that makes sense. Did you find it easy to do, or was it kind of difficult?

Aaliyah: It was kind of difficult to do, since, like I said before, I don't really normally associate, like, emotions or, like, listen to, like, if I'm feeling stressed, I'm probably gonna turn on, like, music that I listen to on a daily, instead of, like, choir songs that we're singing.

JW: That makes sense. So, connecting to that, since I did that exercise with y'all last time, have you noticed yourself...with the music you are listening to, like your regular music, thinking about how the emotions

in your life connect to those songs? Have you found yourself doing that more since I did that?

Aaliyah: Yeah, definitely more, since, like, you kind of opened that perspective of how music could, like, connect to your own emotions, not just the person singing them.

JW: Awesome. Is there anything about doing that exercise that you found especially helpful?

Aaliyah: just, like, knowing that, like, you're not the only one that feels certain ways, because, like, certain songs can, like, express how, like, you're feeling, because normally I don't talk about my emotions, like, on a daily basis, and, like, songs is one way that a lot of people express their emotions.

JW: Awesome. Was there any part of that exercise that you found kind of stressful or uncomfortable?

Aaliyah: just, like, some songs were kind of confusing, like, I didn't know how to feel about them, or, like, which emotion, like, they made me feel. Like, I... because at the start of the year, I just say, like, oh, I'm singing choir, because, like, that's my choir songs, and now, like, I really enjoy choir and want to do it more, because I love singing, but I don't like being, like, a solo or, like, having, like, singing in front of people, so being in, like, a big choir or, like, singing with other people helps me a lot, so now I look forward to choir every day instead of going because I just have to.

JW: That's awesome. Alright, so this is one of the last ones. Is there anything you want the adults in your life to know about emotions and how kids experience emotions?

Aaliyah: I'd say, like, definitely, like, just knowing like...like I said before, like, being understanding, because kids have their own emotions, too, and they're not going to be happy all the time. And, like, like, kids my age a lot, we're going through, like, a more awkward phase. So, like, sometimes we're, like, different, or, like, not feeling ourselves, and, like, adults need to, like, understand that kids are not always, like, happily...happy and, like, bubbly all the time, and, like, they have multiple emotions.

JW: That's awesome. Is there anything else you wanted to share about music and emotion that you think is important?

Aaliyah: I... I don't really know, like, not really, like, I think I said it.

JW: Yeah, you did. That was great, and that was my last question, so perfect! Great job!