

# Understanding and Helping Young Musicians with Mental Health & Wellness Issues



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**and**

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# **Articles on H&W Topics by Dr. Meyer**

**“Ten Guidelines for First-Year Ensemble Directors”**  
*Texas Bandmasters Review*, Dec. 2018 issue

**“Financial Advice for Young Percussionists”**  
*Percussive Notes*, May 2018 issue

**“9 Ways to Reduce Burnout”**  
*Percussive Notes*, March 2016 issue

**“Using Yoga to Help Prevent Percussion Injuries”**  
*Percussive Notes*, March 2015

# DISCLAIMER

**Know your school's/organization's policies:**

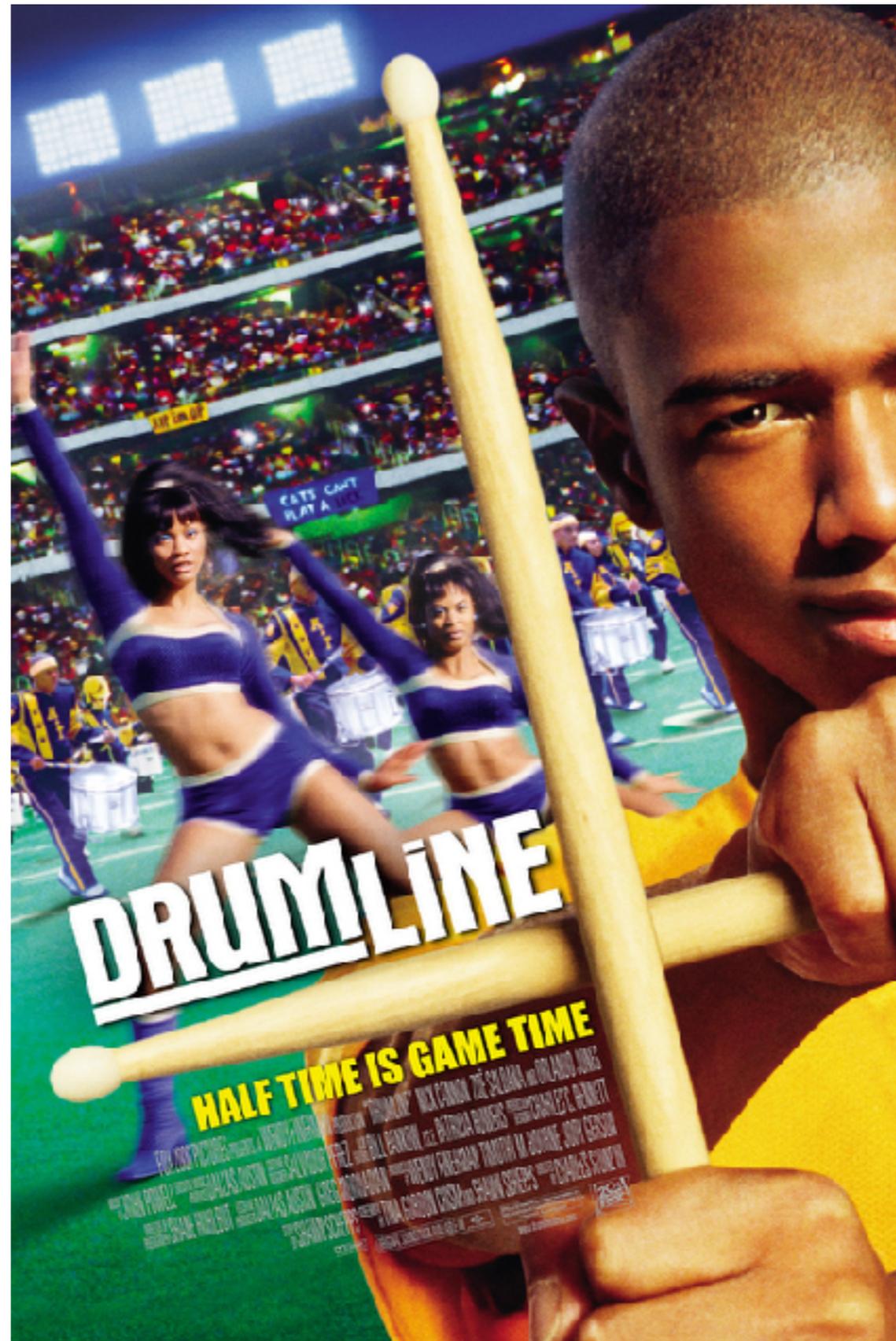
- FERPA
- Child Abuse/Duty to Report
- etc.

**Stop a conversation if you gets uncomfortable.**

**“Don't be an island.”**

**If you are worried about something that happens or is said, bring it to the attention of someone one above you, immediately.**

# STORY TIME



# WHAT I DID

- **Notice “red flags”**
- **Discuss in a private setting**
- **Listen more than talk**
- **Relate to the student**
- **Offer advice (therapy, counseling, mindfulness techniques, common knowledge help)**
- **Emphasize coming back to you again if anything comes up**
- **End on a positive**



# WHAT WE WILL DISCUSS



**Mental H&W Statistics**

**Warning Signs**

**Tips for Preventing  
Mental H&W Issues**

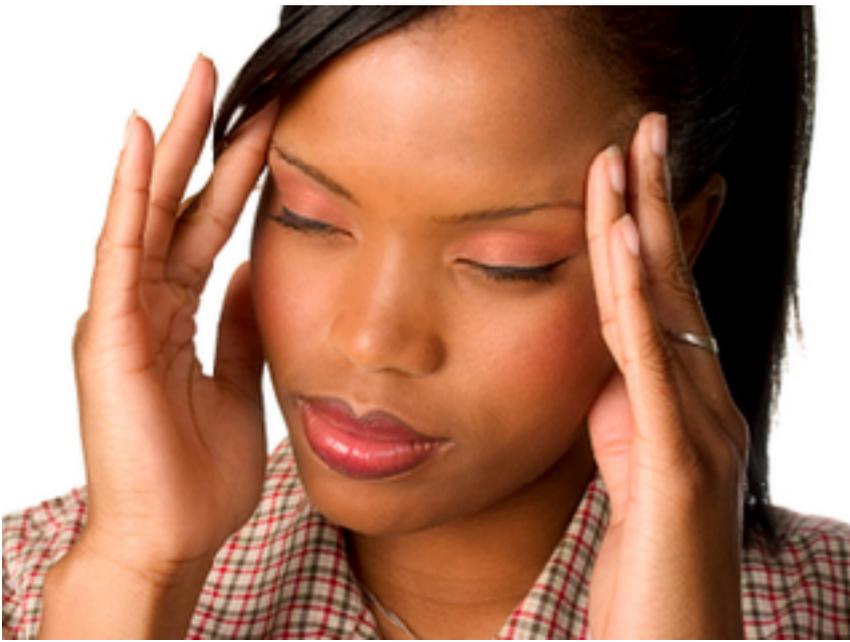
# **STATISTICS**

*(National Alliance on Mental Health)*

- **75% mental health conditions begin by age 24**
- **Ages of 18 and 24: 1 in 4 have a diagnosable mental illness**
- **College students: 11% diagnosed/treated for anxiety; 10% diagnosed/treated for depression**
- **College students: 80% of felt overwhelmed; 45% have felt hopeless**
- **73% of students living with a mental health condition experienced a mental health crisis on campus, yet 34.2% reported that their college did not know about their crisis.**
  - **“Stigma” #1 reason students do not seek help**
- **7% of college students “seriously considered suicide” during the past year**
  - **Suicide = 3rd leading cause of death on college campuses**

# PHYSICAL WARNING SIGNS

- Not eating, throwing up, significant weight loss/gain, over-eating or avoiding food
- Constantly feeling exhausted despite getting sleep or not sleeping well at all
- Not noticing pain/tension in the body from working or thinking about work constantly
- Experiencing frequent headaches or dizzy spells
- Getting sick more often with head colds, stomach flu, etc.



# **MENTAL/EMOTIONAL WARNING SIGNS**

- Difficulty in concentrating or staying still**
- Careless mistakes they normally wouldn't make**
- Lashing out at others due to pressure and frustration**
- Lacking opinions or ideas during classroom discussions or group projects**
- Losing confidence, motivation, and otherwise feeling incapable to keep deadlines**
- Intense worries or fears**
- Drastic changes in behavior, personality or sleeping habits**
- Severe mood swings that cause problems in relationship**
- Sensitive about small issues with others like comments or criticism**
- Not being able to concentrate on leisure activities like reading or watching a film**
- Constantly feeling bored or uninterested in matters you used to enjoy**

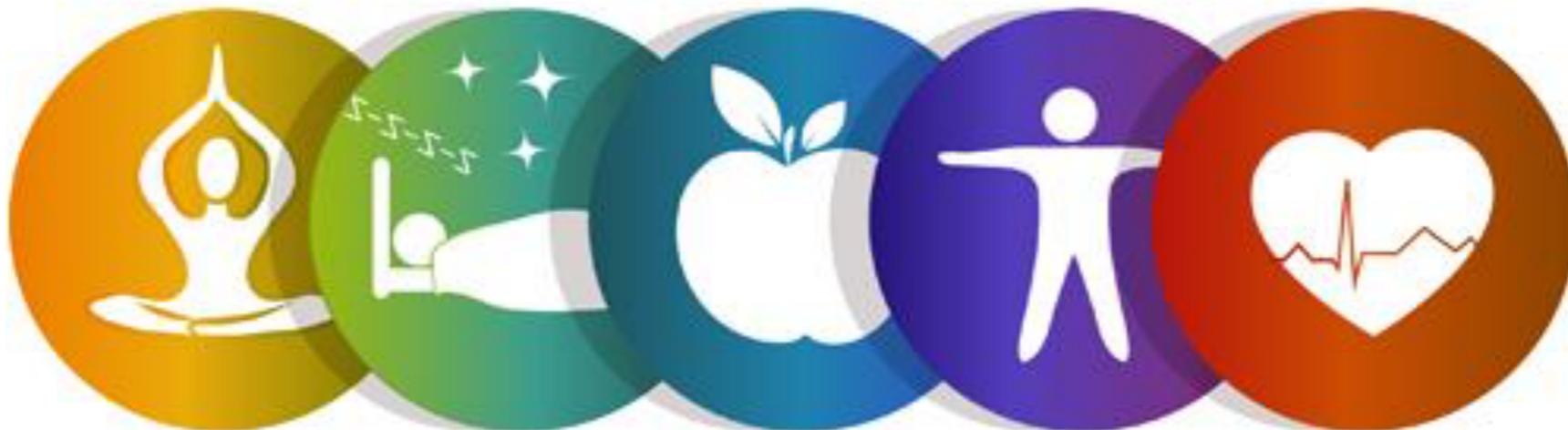
# GENERAL TIPS ON REDUCING/ PREVENTING STUDENT H&W ISSUES

## The “Big 3”

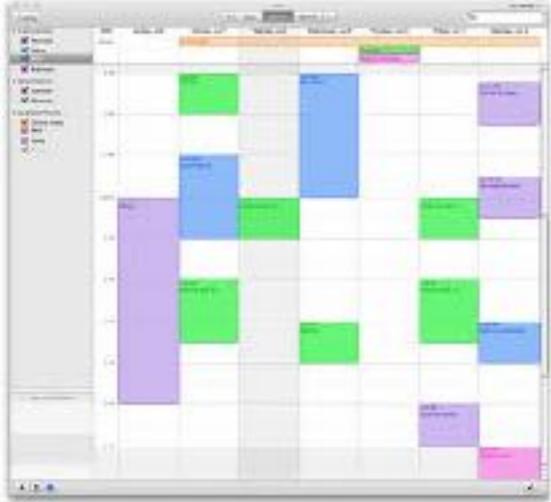
**Eat**

**Sleep**

**Exercise**



# SPECIFIC TIPS ON REDUCING/ PREVENTING STUDENT H&W ISSUES



- Time Management and Organization

- Breaking Down Responsibilities



- Set Reasonable Goals and Stick to Them



- “Go Dark” with Social-Media Shutdown



# **“When Music Goes Up in Flames: The Impact of Advising on Music Major Burnout”**

*by Marilee L. Teasley and Erin M. Buchanan*

## **ADVISING:**

- **Quality academic advising = persistence and retention**
- **Concerned about well-being & progress = retention**

## **STUDENTS:**

- **Most students: self-esteem linked to performance**
  - **focus on progress; not end-result**
- **Practice rooms can lead to exhaustion, isolation, and loneliness**
- **Practicing can be seen as an unfriendly activity -> competitive/exhausting environment = anxiety, stress, and mental health issues**

## **MISC.:**

- **Professional stressors: lack of progress, job insecurity, and balance between musical/personal life**
- **Other stressors: financial problems, strained relationships, and family emergencies**

# COUNCELING

*(\*Most/all of us are not professional or trained counselors/therapists)*

## Ways to help students in an unofficial “counseling session”

- Know Your Limits
- Clarify Your Role
- Listen
- Help Clarify Concerns
- Offer Support
- Suggest Alternatives for Action
- Follow Up Your Efforts



# EFFECTIVE LISTENING

- **Face the speaker; maintain eye contact**
- **Be attentive, but relaxed**
- **Keep an open mind**
- **Listen and try to picture what the speaker is saying**
- **Don't interrupt; don't impose "solutions"**
- **Wait for speaker to pause to ask clarifying questions**
- **Ask questions only to ensure understanding**
- **Try to feel what the speaker is feeling**
- **Give regular feedback**
- **Pay attention to non-verbal cues**



# **BE AS MENTALLY/PHYSICALLY HEALTHY AS YOU CAN FOR YOUR STUDENTS**

**Be a great role model; not a martyr**

**Take care of yourself = more mental/physical energy to help your students**

**Compartmentalize bad days/situations**



# Dr. Meyer's Recommendations

Understand “this generation”:

- **Long-term attention issues (“Snapchat Generation”)**
  - Discuss small, medium, and large goal setting for specific things: learning a solo, study for an exam, etc.
- **Problem solving issues (“Point-and-Click Generation”)**
  - Discuss simple ideas on how to solve problems: ask questions to peers/teacher/Siri, Google, YouTube tutorials, etc.
- **Time management issues (“Helicopter-Parents Generation”)**
  - Sit down and map out their week by the hour, add in meals, sleep, practice, homework/study, relaxation/friends, etc.
- **Financial issues (highest amount of debt for college students ever)**
  - Make a budget, talk about their spending/saving habits, help them notice the different between “needs” vs. “wants, etc.
  - Talk about what things are: credit cards vs. debt cards, checking, saving, credit scores, mortgages, loans/car loans, etc.
  - Older students - discuss retirement options: Roth IRA vs Traditional IRA, what companies can they use,
  - Other financial resources: Dave Ramsey, ChooseFI, books: Simple Path to Wealth, The Bogleheads' Guide to Investing, A Random Walk Down Wall Street, Your Money or Your Life, etc.

# Dr. Meyer's Recommendations, Cont'd

## "Laziness Does Not Exit, But Unseen Barriers Do" by Devon Price:

- Students struggle to start tasks:
- Students with academic problems -> usually related to other issues: family, financial, relationship, etc.
- You can't make them adults, but you can show them options
  - *Avoid personal stories, "Back in my day..." (students won't care anyways)*

Ask questions every lesson. Asking one question never works; ask 4-6 questions and you will get real responses

Give them different ways to practice: "Practicing with Purpose" by David Kish

## Grounding and Mindfulness Techniques:

- Sleep Meditation
- 30-minute Mindfulness Body Scan
- 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique
  - 5 things you can see
  - 4 things you can feel
  - 3 things you can hear
  - 2 things you can smell
  - 1 thing you can taste
- 5-minute Mindfulness Meditation/Body Scan before practicing:



**Any questions?**



# RESOURCES/LINKS

**“Laziness Does Not Exit, But Unseen Barriers Do” by Devon Price:**

[https://medium.com/@devonprice/laziness-does-not-exist-3af27e312d01?fbclid=IwAR0YuRd6KhilpAmoQfQ\\_Dyv2VsQ585Njvp4pVvqhY2Zyr6hqYNjoA5AKJrE](https://medium.com/@devonprice/laziness-does-not-exist-3af27e312d01?fbclid=IwAR0YuRd6KhilpAmoQfQ_Dyv2VsQ585Njvp4pVvqhY2Zyr6hqYNjoA5AKJrE)

**National Alliance on Mental Illness**

[www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)

**5-minute Mindfulness Body Scan**

<https://youtu.be/dBNc5dQh8zQ>

**30-minute Mindfulness Body Scan**

<https://youtu.be/6d0cq7YQmMY>

**Sleep Meditation**

[https://youtu.be/L12\\_GAi2UQ0](https://youtu.be/L12_GAi2UQ0)

**Stanford University “Counseling Students Overview”**

<https://teachingcommons.stanford.edu/resources/teaching-resources/interacting-students/counseling-students>

**www.Brad-Meyer.com/documents/**

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