

# Music Therapy on Stress and Depression in High School Students

Weetiwat Siriwattanakorn

\*Bangkok Christian College, Bangkok, Thailand

\*\*\*\*\*

## Abstract:

Teenage suicide rates have risen over the past year as a result of stress and anxiety. In order to lessen the incidence of suicides among people who are under the age of adolescence, studies have identified a variety of approaches to relieve tension and stress in pupils. The vast majority of students, according to a survey, listen to music on a regular basis. Understanding the relationship between music therapy and how it treats anxiety and stress is essential to examine its potential to help high school students deal with stress and depression. This article discusses the benefits and drawbacks of incorporating music therapy into the lives of adolescents. Despite the risks of employing music therapy, there are many instances in which the enormous benefits of musicality surpass them. Acknowledging how to utilize music therapy effectively will enable students to benefit from it in a way that lowers their stress and protects against developing depression and potentially committing suicide.

**Keywords —Music Therapy, Stress, Anxiety, Depression, Adolescents, Utilizing Music**

\*\*\*\*\*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Over time, there have been increasing suicide attempts, with high school students being one of the suicidal age groups (Wasserman 11). This is tied to stress and anxiety, which are common components of life that everyone must have encountered. These variables can have been brought on by major occurrences that had an impact on human lives or by a building of multiple stressful conditions. For instance, Covid 19 which has spread pandemics around the world is the one that most people would recognize. Face masks, social distancing, quarantines, and other variables had to be altered in order to meet the new typical lifestyles. One of the reasons that can have contributed to stress and anxiety are these alterations and their repercussions.

As time went by, those tension continued to transform into long-term stress, causing people to

develop depression (Monroe 70). There are a great lot of potential reasons that might drive teenagers into generating stress. Beyond the current world situation, pupils have to explore other realities. Achieving their desired occupations and college are among their aspirations, all of which they exerted under peer pressure, under stress, and out of concern that they wouldn't be able to fulfill their goals. These unpleasant thoughts and conditions have an effect on producing stress and anxiety in students. Students who meet them usually go on to experience despair (Monroe 70), and some of them may eventually commit suicide (Takahashi 360).

People could not reasonably endure this degree of stress continuously. They each have different coping techniques for the difficulties they are now confronting. While some individuals visit the gym, others spend their time doing leisurely and enjoyable activities. The same is true for students; a study of high school students indicated that more

than half had listened to music. Most of them acknowledged that music has helped soothe their feelings from their current situations (Gurgen 238). For the purpose of this article, which analyzes how music therapy may assist high school students deal with stress and depression, it is crucial to understand the connection between music therapy and how it addresses anxiety and stress.

## **II. CONTENT**

### **Stress and Anxiety**

Each year, there are more students experiencing stress and anxiety. According to the statistics, there are presently 60.4% of students reported moderate to severe levels of stress and anxiety. Additionally, the percentage of depressed students was 9.2%. The high proportion of anxiety and depression among students has a negative impact on quality of life, attrition, and academic performance (Khesht-Masjedi 799). According to research, 8 out of every 100,000 adolescents have ended their own life by committing suicide because they were unable to cope with the circumstances they were encountering. Data obtained also indicate a rising tendency in suicides throughout time (Miron 2362-2364). "Suicide is the fourth biggest cause of mortality among 15-19 year-olds" when compared to other age groups (World Health Organization 1). It is evident that stress and anxiety have had a substantial impact on students' lives.

One of the most remarkable experiences in life is likely to have been as a teenager. It is a period where new experiences can be gain and live life to its fullest. However, it is also rather typical to encounter students who are anxious. It has been well recognized that tensions are triggered by excessive thinking, a sense of being burdened, a fear about falling short of expectations, etcetera. Nevertheless, it made students become further

doubt about themselves which in turn led into depression (Soh 2). Factors contributed to the causes of stress and anxiety has been surveyed by Othman revealed that societal factors that have an impact on people's daily life were the main contributors to these conditions, following by their GPA scores, and their socioeconomic factors, respectively (6). For ones encountering depression, risk factors which severely affect them were family factors, social lifestyles, GPA, respectively (Othman 6). It is readily apparent that schools and social interactions have played a high role in developing stress and anxiety or even depression (Othman 6-9).

### **Approach to Music Therapy**

Music therapy has shown to be an effective way to deal with stress and anxiety (Sharma 60-61). It is how we utilize the use of music to cure or relief us from tense situations. Music is way more powerful than simply combining various pitches to produce distinct tones. The way it connects to our emotions, and deeply affect our mental states and raise our mood is beyond astounding. A survey by Gurgen has revealed that a majority of the students—more than half—tend to enjoy listening to music (238). While music has undoubtedly helped students relax in certain tense situations, music also healed and nurtured these students while they were at their lowest (Gurgen 236-239). It is no wonder how headphone usage is on the rise and on-demand music streams and applications have been used more often than the past (Richter 1). The recorded data from 2013 to 2021 demonstrates the increasing trend of buying headphones over the years (Laricchia 1), it can be clearly derived that music is becoming increasingly engaging in our daily lives.

### **Drawbacks of music therapy**

However, there are dangers and inconveniences that may arise if music therapy is not done correctly. Music that is used deliberately during people's negative state could induce them to become more sorrowful of themselves (Gattino 63-64). People who are devastated, for instance, may get even more depressed if they continue to listen to melancholy music. Tensions created from this music can cause anxiety and discomfort, making people become incongruous of the sound they are experiencing (Hiller 3). These people may view it as a tool for expressing themselves in their toughest moments, but the music chosen may end up making their moods and feelings worse. As can be seen, music that should have helped people feel better about themselves has instead driven them further into their miserable attitude. When people's suffering goes beyond their capacity to endure, they may undergo mood swings that push them toward suicide as a means of emancipation (Takahashi 360). Obviously, listening to mistaken music styles may impact people's emotions in specific situations.

Music can also evoke intrusive memories (Gattino 64). For instance, someone who lost their mother could get the unintended source of harm when Mother's Day related music has been played. Craving, tension, and physical distress could be potentially caused by this oblivious source of harm (Murakami 8). Applications that use music can also influence how listeners recognize their past events. (Ding 46-47). The program only played suggestive music since it was unable to discern people's feelings or people's present circumstances, which sometimes may have an adverse effect on their mood and accidentally brought up painful memories (Ding 46-47).

Dangers in the lyrics of the song can also be considered as highly sensitive and dangerous

(Silverman 3). While the melody of the track can bring relaxation and comfort, the words within the track could potentially be emotionally damaging (Silverman 3). For instance, some listeners may find the menacing lyrics of underground music upsetting. These viewers could also show indications of weariness, which might trigger tension or even depression during their negative state (Murakami 8-9). Understandably, music can have dangers and drawbacks if not treated carefully.

### **Benefits of music therapy**

Despite the possible drawbacks of music therapy, the positive effects still exceed the negative effects. Music has become essential for adolescents who needed ways to fulfill their emotional needs; getting through difficult moments, and reducing tension and stress (North 267-269). During adolescence, their main source of social interaction has shifted from parents and family to peers (Tomova 3). Peer acceptance has played a crucial role for teens which makes fitting in a peer group become the key goal in adolescence (Tomova 3). It motivates teens to socialize while consequently, also increased the negative sensitivity of social exclusions (Tomova 3-4). This causes teenagers to avoid taking actions due to the potential consequences that could result to negative evaluations or exclusion by others, leading some to admire in being more resilient and solitude (Tomova 3). With concerns of socialization, music has become a part of adolescents' lives in expressing their emotions, enabling them to define themselves in relation to others (North 255). Stress and tension can also be easily relieved by different genres of music. According to Chen, studies have shown that listening to jazz and classical music were able to significantly enhance calmness (49-50). Jazz and Pop music, meanwhile, have also shown a

significant boost in mood and a decrease in stress (Chen 50). It is evident that music significantly affects adolescents' ability to deal with their circumstances (North 269).

Adolescents have numerous ways to utilize their use of music. Teenagers who like playing instruments in their spare time may even create bands with their friends. Additionally, playing an instrument has been shown to enhance adolescent cognitive function and scholastic achievement (Román-Caballero 17–19). Other teens appreciate attending concerts, singing karaoke, or parties. These kinds of gatherings all share a love of music, allowing them to develop social bonding and encourage self-socialization (Tarr 1). By maintaining a harmonized pulse, synchronization in music has proven essential for fostering connections among individuals (Tarr 2). A neurotransmitter called endorphins is also produced throughout the process, making the individual feel positive about themselves as well as those they are synching with (Tarr 3-5).

Participating in group activities may also create communal music, a method by which people utilize music to connect with others (Higgins 283-284). A community can be built through activities such playing in a band, attending concerts, or simply inviting friends for a hangover party with music being played in the background. It goes beyond how people listen to music. Sense of belonging can also be evoked via composing music with peers and playing instruments together; music has a great impact on establishing meaningful and connections (Hallam 156). As can be witnessed, teenagers can benefit from communal music through developing friendships as well as reducing stress.

Social media platforms now also heavily rely on music (Dewan 101). Currently, social networking

tools are accessible via the internet, and during the past several years, accessing them via applications on smartphone devices has become even simpler. These apps have grown to be an integral part of teens' life, and some studies even affirm how using social media can help them feel less lonely and develop their identity (Uhls 67). All media platforms have employed a variety of music genres. In every movie we watched, as well as every stream and short we scrolled, for instance, music was present. Additionally, it has been discovered that social media has played a significant role in helping adolescents relieve themselves from their day-to-day stress (Whiting 365), highlighting the importance of music in adolescent lives. Music is a part of every stress-relieving act, therefore, it stands to reason that music can assist adolescents deal with stress.

### III. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, regarding the increasing number of adolescents acquiring moderate to severe stress & anxiety or even depression, music therapy has affirmed to be a means of relieving and unwinding those who are currently experiencing adverse circumstances. Numerous experts have acknowledged the benefits of music therapy for students who frequently need to express their feelings, cope with challenging situations, and lower their stress and anxiety. Even with the potential risks and downsides from using music therapy, the immense advantages of musicality still outweigh the drawbacks. Music is now a part of people's life, allowing everyone to connect with one another and develop enduring bonds. As shown, music has a vast range of benefits, and diverse research studies have been carried out recently to better examine its many still-unexplored areas. Acknowledging how to utilize music therapy

effectively will benefit students in various ways, enhancing them to become a delightful individual in the near future.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Chen, Junle Richard. "The impact of different genres of music on teenagers." *Int J Psychol Stud* 10.4 (2018): 42. <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/3fb5/8f0aa4311fc2992008035b4ebd91722fa66a.pdf>
- [2] Dewan, Sanjeev, and Jui Ramaprasad. "Social media, traditional media, and music sales." *Mis Quarterly* 38.1 (2014): 101-122. [https://www.mcgill.ca/desautels/files/desautels/social\\_media\\_traditional\\_media\\_and\\_music\\_sales\\_-\\_dewan\\_and\\_ramaprasad\\_-\\_misq\\_2014\\_0.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/desautels/files/desautels/social_media_traditional_media_and_music_sales_-_dewan_and_ramaprasad_-_misq_2014_0.pdf)
- [3] Ding, Yiwen, and Chang Liu. "Exploring drawbacks in music recommender systems: the Spotify case." (2015). <https://www.divaportal.org/smash/get/diva2:896794/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
- [4] Erkkilä, Jaakko, et al. "Individual music therapy for depression: randomised controlled trial." *The British journal of psychiatry* 199.2 (2011): 132-139. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/the-british-journal-of-psychiatry/article/individual-music-therapy-for-depression-randomised-controlled-trial/A1CD72904929CECCB956F4F3B09605AF>
- [5] Gattino, Gustavo. "Some Considerations about the Negative Effects of Music Some Considerations about the Negative Effects of Music." Aalborg University's Research Portal, Federal University of Goiás, 3 Nov. 2015. <https://vbn.aau.dk/en/publications/algumas-considera%C3%A7%C3%B5es-sobre-os-efeitos-negativos-da-m%C3%BAsica>
- [6] Gurgen, Elif Tekin. "Social and emotional function of music listening: reasons for listening to music." *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research* 16.66 (2016): 229-242. <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/623005>
- [7] Hallam, Susan, et al. "Perceived Benefits of Active Engagement with Making Music in Community Settings." *International Journal of Community Music*, Aug.2012, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/272206074\\_Perceived\\_benefits\\_of\\_active\\_engagement\\_with\\_making\\_music\\_in\\_community\\_setting\\_s](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/272206074_Perceived_benefits_of_active_engagement_with_making_music_in_community_setting_s)
- [8] Higgins, Lee. "Acts of Hospitality: The Community in Community Music." *Music Education Research*, July 2007, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232855237\\_Acts\\_of\\_hospitality\\_the\\_community\\_in\\_Community\\_Music](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232855237_Acts_of_hospitality_the_community_in_Community_Music)
- [9] Hiller, James, and Susan C Gardstrom. "Selection of Music Experiences in Music Therapy." OUP Academic, Oxford University Press, 24 Feb. 2018, <https://academic.oup.com/mtp/article-abstract/36/1/79/4907971?redirectedFrom=fulltext&login=false>
- [10] Hiller, James, and Susan Gardstrom. "Warning: Music Therapy Comes with Risks." *Music Faculty Publications*, 19 Mar. 2019, [https://ecommons.udayton.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1014&context=mus\\_fac\\_pub](https://ecommons.udayton.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1014&context=mus_fac_pub)
- [11] Khesht-Masjedi, Mahnaz F., et al. "The relationship between gender, age, anxiety, depression, and academic achievement among teenagers." *Journal of family medicine and primary care* 8.3 (2019): 799. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6482750/>
- [12] Laricchia, Federica. "Unit Shipments of Headphones Worldwide from 2013 to 2021 (in Millions)." 1 Aug. 2022, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/236075/revenue-of-headphone-shipments-in-the-united-states/>. Accessed 17 Aug. 2022.
- [13] Maratos, Anna, et al. "Music therapy for depression." *Cochrane database of systematic reviews* 1 (2008). <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Arvind-Singh-21/post/Does-the-MUSIC-have-the-Power-to-HEALING-Diseases/attachment/5b80ecccfe4a76455ee1f85/AS%3A663389894369283%401535175884800/download/1.pdf>
- [14] Miron, Oren, et al. "Suicide rates among adolescents and young adults in the United States, 2000-2017." *Jama* 321.23 (2019): 2362-2364. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2735809>
- [15] Monroe, Scott M., and Mark W. Reid. "Life stress and major depression." *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 18.2 (2009): 68-72. <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.995.1734&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- [16] Murakami, Brea. "The Music Therapy and Harm Model (MTHM). Conceptualizing Harm within Music Therapy Practice." *ECOS - Revista Científica De Musicoterapia y Disciplinas Afines*, 1 Apr. 2021, <https://revistas.unlp.edu.ar/ECOS/article/view/12301/11104>
- [17] North, Adrian C., David J. Hargreaves, and Susan A. O'Neill. "The importance of music to adolescents." *British journal of educational psychology* 70.2 (2000): 255-272. [https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/50397579/00070990015808320161118-24221-1ql8sw3-with-cover-page-v2.pdf?Expires=1660717822&Signature=M7qC9taZyTXy9RqCH6QsuCigKlIV9neO3yKq7r-iLNxWaXIKE3tAHy3EUMaRy2vapCFeKJi0PK8mZ9v-ECsSFH1jcw67X73qLgQy18G2sxSP4DwMsDhm59YMQ2j1cG50Cbajizw97zASx0HneraR392Nzew3hUsUu7wjasrWZOla-YlcFSodHwGqKykblRcgtENFCbLm26NiseuMxY-vAwQdJrNnX1Bz8L15guo4Bn-fOAlrk-jRP3uK9u8zfh3BP5IP0ilqqSFgyKur5-XBYYXWDWYsPgp19oyGChDEmdTF9XYQ0Nv-MojBpq611YAa2h87z2T2cOmFOrurkQg\\_\\_&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA](https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/50397579/00070990015808320161118-24221-1ql8sw3-with-cover-page-v2.pdf?Expires=1660717822&Signature=M7qC9taZyTXy9RqCH6QsuCigKlIV9neO3yKq7r-iLNxWaXIKE3tAHy3EUMaRy2vapCFeKJi0PK8mZ9v-ECsSFH1jcw67X73qLgQy18G2sxSP4DwMsDhm59YMQ2j1cG50Cbajizw97zASx0HneraR392Nzew3hUsUu7wjasrWZOla-YlcFSodHwGqKykblRcgtENFCbLm26NiseuMxY-vAwQdJrNnX1Bz8L15guo4Bn-fOAlrk-jRP3uK9u8zfh3BP5IP0ilqqSFgyKur5-XBYYXWDWYsPgp19oyGChDEmdTF9XYQ0Nv-MojBpq611YAa2h87z2T2cOmFOrurkQg__&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA)
- [18] Othman, Nasih, et al. "Perceived impact of contextual determinants on depression, anxiety and stress: a survey with university students." *International journal of mental health systems* 13.1 (2019): 1-9. <https://ijmhs.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13033-019-0275-x>
- [19] Richter, Felix. "Music Streaming Hits One-Trillion Milestone in 2019." 13 Jan. 2020, <https://www.statista.com/chart/14647/music-streams-in-the-united-states/>. Accessed 17 Aug. 2022.
- [20] Román-Caballero, Rafael, et al. "Please don't stop the music: A meta-analysis of the cognitive and academic benefits of instrumental musical training in childhood and adolescence." *Educational Research Review* (2022): 100436. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1747938X22000057>
- [21] Sharma, Mamta, and Tanmeet Jagdev. "Use of music therapy for enhancing self-esteem among academically stressed adolescents." *Pakistan Journal of Psychological Research* (2012): 53-64. <https://pjjprnip.edu.pk/index.php/pjjpr/article/download/484/418>
- [22] Silverman, Michael J., et al. "It's...complicated: A Theoretical Model of Music-Induced Harm." *Researchgate*, June 2020, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342570355\\_It'sComplicated\\_A\\_Theoretical\\_Model\\_of\\_Music-Induced\\_Harm](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342570355_It'sComplicated_A_Theoretical_Model_of_Music-Induced_Harm)
- [23] Soh, Nurul Husniyah Binti Che, Anitha Roy, and T. Lakshmi. "Stress, anxiety, and depression in clinical practice of undergraduates and awareness of its effective management-A survey." *Journal of Advanced Pharmacy Education & Research* Apr-Jun 7.2 (2017). <https://japer.in/storage/models/article/qJqGlxqDr2XOWSWGxS19yLABxrcIke7owjNoUIYk8GidN7Wbwb6DVyNux1a/stress-anxiety-and-depression-in-clinical-practice-of-undergraduates-and-awareness-of-its-effectiv.pdf>
- [24] Takahashi, Yoshitomo. "Depression and suicide." *Japan Medical Association Journal* 44.8 (2001): 359-363. [https://www.med.or.jp/english/pdf/2001\\_08/359\\_363.pdf](https://www.med.or.jp/english/pdf/2001_08/359_363.pdf)
- [25] Tarr, Bronwyn, et al. "Music and Social Bonding: 'Self-Other' Merging and Neurohormonal Mechanisms." *Frontiers in Psychology*, *Frontiers Media S.A.*, 30 Sept. 2014. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4179700/>
- [26] Tomova, Livia, Jack L. Andrews, and Sarah-Jayne Blakemore. "The importance of belonging and the avoidance of social risk taking in

- adolescence." *Developmental Review* 61 (2021): 100981.  
[http://tomova.scripts.mit.edu/tomova/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Tomova\\_DevelopmentalReview\\_2021.pdf](http://tomova.scripts.mit.edu/tomova/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Tomova_DevelopmentalReview_2021.pdf)
- [27] Uhls, Yalda T., Nicole B. Ellison, and Kaveri Subrahmanyam. "Benefits and costs of social media in adolescence." *Pediatrics* 140, Supplement\_2 (2017): S67-S70.  
<http://sefb320.pbworks.com/w/file/131917338/Benefits%20and%20Costs%20of%20Social%20media%20in%20adolescents.pdf>
- [28] Wasserman, Danuta, et al. "Suicide prevention in childhood and adolescence: a narrative review of current knowledge on risk and protective factors and effectiveness of interventions." *Asia Pacific Psychiatry* 13.3 (2021): e12452.  
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/appy.12452>
- [29] Whiting, Anita, and David Williams. "Why people use social media: a uses and gratifications approach." *Qualitative market research: an international journal* (2013).  
<http://cs.furman.edu/~tallen/csc271/source/socialMediaUsers.pdf>
- [30] World Health Organization, Suicide, 17 June 2021,  
<https://www.who.int/news-room/factsheets/detail/suicide#:~:text=Suicide%20is%20the%20fourth%20leading,common%20methods%20of%20suicide%20globally>.