



Case studies: How can the arts and creativity support people who are shielding or vulnerable during Covid-19?

Project: Music & Wellbeing website; Wellbeing Live events

Organisation: Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Trust

Region: North East England

Introduction

There are two parts to the project:

Music and Wellbeing website:

This is a set of pages of playlists and videos designed to help users to relax, enliven and manage their moods. It uses a combination of curation and X-System analyses. X System is a model of the musical brain which can predict with accuracy the neurophysiological effects of specific musical tracks. The System can then order the tracks in such a way as to “entrain” the user, and lead them from “where they are” emotionally to “where they want to be”. Playlists for specific issues such as depression and trauma work in the same way. To benefit fully from these playlists, users ideally must be prepared to listen to all tracks in a playlist (average 20 minutes)

Wellbeing Live events - Connection through music

These take place every Thursday evening with additional events for targeted groups. Normally musicians with rich emotional expression are invited to perform live on Zoom. The participants add comments in real time, and there are discussions of the music and what it means and how it affects us. We believe it is a new form of music making, where people share their reactions and feelings.

Funders

This has been entirely pro bono. X-System paid for the PRS music streaming licence (specifically granted for a “medical trial”), All musicians have performed pro bono. All engineers for the website have also worked voluntarily.

Who is it for?

We are concerned primarily with mental health issues, and in particular those arising from the current crisis. We have sought to offer support and opportunities for self-care to both patients, frontline NHS staff and the general public at large, using music to help people relax, be enlivened and to manage their moods, working in a fully culturally inclusive way. We have also targeted specific challenges, including trauma, depression and care of the elderly (the subject of a separate submission to you). We are currently developing materials for women under threat, children’s mental health challenges and perinatal care.

What outcomes were/are you aiming for?

Through the website we wish to offer opportunities for musical self-care in mental health and general wellbeing; in the Wellbeing Live events we offer connectedness, community and uplift.

Where is it happening?

Primarily the North East of England, but our website analytics show nationwide usage, and clusters of users abroad (USA, Australia, Germany, Austria, Finland, Spain etc.).

Are you working in partnership?

We have partnered with partner NHS organisations, the Music, Mind Spirit Trust, Northumbria and Newcastle Universities, and many individual musicians including Sir Thomas Allen, Kathryn Tickell, Martin Stephenson, Michael Copley, Steven Osborne, Clea Friend, Sting and a host of musicians from the North East area. The recovery college online is staffed by people with mental health problems and that they work with us to manage the playlists and site.

How many people took/are taking part?

Our Music and Wellbeing website has attracted 50,000 users. Our Wellbeing Live events draw audiences of between 50 to 100 with as many as 500 further viewings on Facebook. We estimate around 8,000 participations in the last three months.

For how long has it been happening?

We began early in April and intend to continue as long as is possible

What were/are the main outputs?

We have a Music Wellbeing self-care website and regular Wellbeing Live Events

Evaluation:

Music for Wellbeing in Response to Covid-19

X-System, TEWV NHS Recovery College, Northumbria University, Newcastle

Northumbria University, UK conducted research into the impact of a music intervention with various playlists on wellbeing and emotional state. The intervention was designed using X-system technology for regulating emotion and enhancing wellbeing. The playlists were uploaded to the TEWV NHS Recovery College website. All contributions were free and in response to mental health challenges during the Covid-19 crisis, March-June 2020.

The findings from the research suggest that the X-System’s relaxing playlists led to a decrease in arousal levels and the enlivening playlists to an increase in activation. Predictions of valence and physical wellbeing were significant. Thus, appropriately curated and calibrated music playlists may be able to lead the listener by entrainment to positive relaxation, to activation states or indeed to positive mood change that may have health benefits.

Statistical Analysis

IBM SPSS Statistics software (Version 26) and Microsoft Excel for Office 365 were used for the statistical analysis of the data. The mean scores for each of four wellbeing dimensions and the valence before and after the intervention can be seen in Table 1. They show an increase for all the values post-intervention. The biggest increase is for the sense of meaning and valence at 1.07, and the smallest is for relationships, 0.11. These values can better be seen in the radar charts in Figure 1.

Table 1 Mean scores before and after the intervention. (Source: Northumbria University, 2020)

	Before	After	Change
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Physical	1.36	1.91	0.56
Emotional	0.84	1.93	1.09
Relationships	1.47	1.58	0.11
Sense of Meaning	0.56	1.62	1.07
Valence	1.18	2.24	1.07

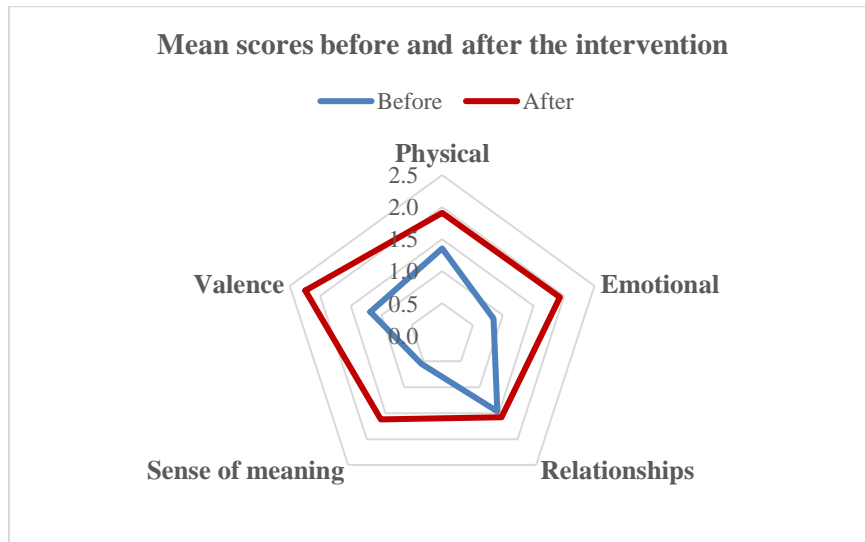


Figure 1 Mean scores before and after the intervention. (Source: Northumbria University, 2020)

We are currently working on a publication of the results and reserve the right to use the information, tables and figures in this document for further publication.

NU team

What have been the challenges and successes for you?

The challenges were initially around developing a new form of engagement with music via the wellbeing live events. We did not have a production team to support and managed with the determination of one of our team. We have become slicker in our delivery and now have a Facebook page, a standard flyer with circulation list and a standard format which flows well. The initial challenge of time of working on the live events outside of NHS time has actually freed up the creative process and enabled very agile and fast development.

Further information

<https://www.recoverycollegeonline.co.uk/music-for-wellbeing/>

Our group was formed as part of Trauma Informed Practice in the Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Trust, and the project we describe here is part of TEWV Recovery College online. We have acted separately from the NHS when necessary. For example local NHS authorities prefer not to use Zoom, so we have had to organise zoom-based events independently. Our members are an alliance of NHS staff, led by Dr Angela Kennedy clinical psychologist, trauma informed care lead (tewv), Mental Health Clinical Lead for the Northern Clinical Network and pro bono volunteers, led by Professor Nigel Osborne.

Overview of mission

Using music to aid wellbeing.... AI to predict how we will react... creation of playlists to support wellbeing... online events to create spaces for people to listen together, share their reactions to the music and we raise one key message each week about mental health that is elicited by the shared experience.... Events for specific groups of people e.g. care homes and people recently bereaved.

Nigel Osborne (who completed this case study) is an NHS and freelance volunteer.