

Musicians' Health Resources

Compiled by Lori Watson

As musicians, often with unpredictable schedules and finances, we face a challenge to identify, share and seek advice and treatment for physical, mental and emotional health issues, often related to our music and self-employed lifestyles.

There are two main factors at play: genetics and experiences over time (incl. our responses to them). Each of us has our own unique combination of genes and experiences.

If you are experiencing physical, mental or emotional difficulties it is important that you seek help to understand them and identify possible treatments.

We have gathered these resources that include information and advice, relevant organisations, and recommended health practitioners and specialists.

Musicians Union wellbeing page

<http://www.musiciansunion.org.uk/Home/Advice/Your-Career/Health-and-Safety/Wellbeing>

British Association for Performing Arts Medicine

<http://www.bapam.org.uk/>

BAPAM is an independent charity which gives specialist physical and psychological health advice, and if further treatment is required, provides information about appropriate health care practitioners, taking into account your needs as a musician.

***NB** BAPAM have cut back the majority of their services due to funding changes, they still have useful resources on their website.

MENTAL HEALTH

We all need to talk about mental health. Musicians are more likely to experience anxiety and depression than many other professions. Recent statistics showed that students of music experienced higher levels of destructive anxiety than students of medicine.

It is estimated that 1 in 6 people experienced a common mental health problem last week. And more than 1 in 4 adults are currently facing a mental health problem(s), 1 in 10 young people. These estimates are likely to be low due to the continuing lack of understanding and/or willingness to disclose mental health problems.

The most common mental health problems are: anxiety, depression, obsessive-compulsive disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, eating disorders, and bipolar disorders. There are many other mental health problems including Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD), personality disorders, Dissociative Identity Disorders (DID), Hypomania and mania, Post-natal depression, Psychosis/Psychotic experiences, Schizophrenia and undefined disorders, which are more challenging to identify and understand. We are all individuals.

Mental Health Resources

Help Musicians UK

Mental Health Support Line (24hrs/7days) – **0808 802 8008**

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

OCD Action <http://www.ocdaction.org.uk/>

OCD UK <http://www.ocduk.org/>

Anxiety

Anxiety UK <https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk>

Moodjuice <http://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk>

Depression

Action on Depression <http://www.actionondepression.org/>

Breathing Space <http://breathingspace.scot/>

Depression Alliance <http://www.depressionalliance.org/>

Panic attacks

NHS Choices <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/pages/understanding-panic-attacks>

Mind <http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/anxiety-and-panic-attacks>

Eating disorders

B-EAT <http://www.b-eat.co.uk>

NHS Choices <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Eating-disorders>

Stigma

Stigma is a mark of shame/disgrace/disapproval that results in an individual being shunned or rejected by others. The stigma of physical and mental health problems can affect family relationships, friendships, professional opportunities, ability to recover,

Alcohol, drugs, addiction

http://bapam.org.uk/documents/TheDrinksareonMe_BAPAMfactsheet.pdf

[Alcoholics Anonymous http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/)

[Alcohol Concern](#)

[Al-Anon family groups](#)

[Drugscope](#)

[Talk to Frank](#)

[Narcotics Anonymous](#)

[Gamblers Anonymous](#)

Videos

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/podcasts-and-videos/videos>

<https://www.youtube.com/user/ttcnow2008>

<http://www.nhs.uk/Tools/Pages/mentalhealthvideowall.aspx>

Dr Susan Arjmand - <https://vimeo.com/51640592>

See Me

<https://www.seemescotland.org/>

See Me is an organisation working to reduce mental health discrimination and stigma. Personal stories and information on how stigma can relate to individual health problems are particularly useful.

- Do you know enough about mental health?
- Check to see if you could be contributing to stigma or discrimination related to mental health problems.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

Repetitive strain injuries can often be repaired through physiotherapy and appropriate exercises. Don't ignore unexplained pain when playing your instrument.

Ask your GP about referral for NHS physiotherapy in your local area (in Glasgow this is currently a self-referral form). Once seen by a physiotherapist if your problem requires specialist attention, the physio can refer you on.

Help Musicians

www.helpmusicians.org.uk/

The Help Musicians organisation can provide help in a crisis and information and advice for musicians' hearing, vocal health, mental health, long-term illness, terminal illness and bereavement and help in retirement. They can also help with funds towards specialist help e.g. physio

Dystonia

Dystonia is a neurological movement disorder. It is caused by the brain sending incorrect information to the muscles and is characterised by involuntary, prolonged muscle contractions. It can affect a range of parts of the body including the neck, eyes, voice and hand. Focal dystonia affects approximately 1-2% of musicians and dystonia affecting the hand often comes from performing repeated movements.

<http://www.dystonia.org.uk>

And Finally

If you have used any resources which do not feature here, please do get in touch with the links (confidentiality assured). You can email membership@traditionalmusicforum.org