

Running Head: INTERVENTION PLAN

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Arts-Infused Intervention Plan: Bang it Out!

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EDTE 636: Psychology of Exceptional Children and Youth

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## **BANG IT OUT!**

### **INTERVENTION OVERVIEW**

**Subject Area:** Music

**Age Level:** 8 – 18

**Intervention Topic:** Rhythm as a release

**Intervention Rationale:** Whether due to post-traumatic stress disorder or simply the feelings that are commonly associated with pre-adolescence and adolescence, children often feel a lot of anger and anxiety. Unfortunately, these children also often have no outlet or means of release for these feelings. And even more unfortunate is when these children manifest their repressed feelings in negative, destructive ways. Music can be an extremely beneficial means of counteracting this effect, and, more specifically, the drums can allow for not just a mental, but a physical outlet for repressed anger. Unlike string or brass instruments, which involve pressing hairs to a string or blowing through valves, the act of drumming involves the forceful impact of one surface to another. This is a very healthy way to express these negative feelings. Drumming allows for the outright banging, smashing, and pounding out that can channel negativity into a healthy and creative means of expression.

**Intervention Purpose:** To allow a release of anger and anxiety via the understanding and implementation of rhythm and different note values.

**Intervention Objectives:** The student will be able to...

- Manage their feelings of anger, anxiety, and frustrations through rhythmic expression.
- Understand and identify the basics of rhythm and tempo.
- Exemplify the knowledge of quarter and eighth note values by drumming on any available hollow item, such as a bucket or trash bin.

**Intervention Outcomes:** After this intervention, the child will be able to implement the basics of rhythm and utilize rhythm to manage negative feelings and emotions.

**Duration:** One or two one-hour sessions.

**Materials Required:** Hollow item to drum on: Trash bin, bucket, etc. Drum sticks or other sticks to bang on drum item. A seat. And a foot to tap with!

**Advance Set-Up:** Have the drum items (will refer to this as bucket from here on) set up and the drumsticks ready to play. Seats should be set up by buckets.

### **ANTICIPATORY SET**

**Intervention Purpose/Objective:** The child will be able to successfully manage their negative feelings of anger, anxiety, and frustration through rhythmic expression.

**Scaffolding:** Ask the child what kind of music they like. Discuss with them how rhythm always plays a vital part in all music and how playing percussion instruments can be a useful way to deal with negative feelings.

Also, if applicable and appropriate, discuss with child their feelings of anger, anxiety, and/or frustration and where they arise. If the child is comfortable and the situation appropriate, discuss any specific events that may have brought about these feelings. This is *not* necessary, though; we all feel these feelings. What is most important is for the child to understand this, that we all have these feelings, and what's crucial is how we deal with them, how we express these feelings.

**Why Worthwhile:** This intervention is a simple way to connect students with the magic of music and help them discover an independent means of dealing with negative feelings without having to lash out and be destructive.

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Discuss the basic idea of rhythm and how it is the basis, the structure of music.
2. For younger children, singing/humming a well-known song is a great way to introduce this.
3. As you either sing the song or talk about music in general, introduce the idea of clapping and/or tapping a foot to the “beat” of the music. This is rhythm.
4. Then introduce and discuss how rhythm is simply counting the beat or counting along to your claps/foot taps: Usually in the pattern of 1 – 2 – 3 – 4, 1 – 2 – 3 – 4, etc.
5. Especially with the older children, this is the time to introduce the idea of quarter notes and how we usually count in quarter notes.
6. Clapping along with them, have the child count 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 (repeat) with you while clapping and foot tapping.

## **GUIDED PRACTICE**

1. After the child is comfortable clapping and/or foot tapping quarter notes with you, give them their drumsticks and seat them behind their bucket.
2. Then have the child continue to tap their foot to your 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 (repeat) rhythm, and, alternating their right and left hands, smack the bucket to the rhythm.
3. Once the child is comfortable hitting the bucket to the rhythm while counting with their foot, they are ready for eighth notes:
4. Explain that nothing changes as you play eighth notes – your count is the same; your tapping is the same - you are simply doubling up the notes you play. One good way to

explain it is to say: “1 and – 2 and – 3 and – 4 and” and to play the notes along with both the numbers and the “ands.”

### **INDEPENDENT PRACTICE**

1. Have the child then practice their quarter notes and eighth notes on their bucket, alternating between the two as they play continuously.
2. Make sure to emphasize that it’s okay to hit the bucket as hard as the child wants and that the louder, the better! Bang it out!!

### **ASSESSMENT**

1. In this case, the assessment is observational, watching the child’s progress and making sure they can show the difference between the note values and that they can keep their rhythm consistent.

### **CLOSURE**

1. Ask the child how they felt after their drumming and let them know that they can do this activity anytime that they are feeling angry, anxious, and/or frustrated and are in need of a release.

### **ACCOMMODATION**

1. For LD students, visualizing note values can help; write it out on a piece of paper or blackboard.
2. For the visually impaired, make sure to orient them with the space and where they are hitting the bucket.
3. For the hearing impaired, sitting on the floor and sitting closer to the bucket can help the hearing impaired experience the feel of the music.
4. For the physically and/or mentally impaired, the accommodation will have to be in accordance with the specific child. If they can’t use their arms/hands, they can still tap their feet. If this is reversed, they can count out loud instead of tapping their foot. For MR: simplify. Take out the note values part of the intervention and focus on the clapping and tapping.

### **HOMEWORK**

1. Again, encourage the child to apply this activity to their everyday negative feelings.

## RATIONALE

All human beings experience negative feelings. Anger, frustration, anxiety, fear – these feelings can be difficult to deal with and express in a healthy manner. And it can be even more difficult for a child to express these feelings than an adult because they may not have developed the proper tools to understand how to appropriately deal with such feelings. O’Lenic and Arman (2004) point out the importance for a child to possess the skills to properly cope with their negative feelings before the child expresses their feelings in a destructive manner. What can make these common feelings even more acute and destructive is when a child experiences a specific traumatic event or series of events. Riccio, A., Riccio, L., & Rollins (2002) discuss in their book, *Arts-Infused Volunteer Guide for Children in Crisis*, how children can experience trauma in many forms and fashions, from the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 to abuse, and how these traumatic events can lead to psychological disorders like post traumatic stress disorder. Riccio, et al. also points out that children with disabilities are not to be forgotten, but, on the contrary, paid special attention to in terms of trauma because they often do not deal with trauma as the ‘non-disabled would. This is why music is such a wonderful means of allowing children – including the disabled – to appropriately express their negative feelings.

Riccio, et al. (2002) discusses how music is a safe outlet for dealing with negative emotions; how it can raise self-esteem, reduce anxiety, and calm children. I focused specifically on drumming because it is very often that when one is angry or frustrated, they wish to lash out, hit something, or break something. Drumming is perfect to deal with this because it involves, in its most basic form, smashing something into something

else to make a sound. And the best part is: that's the whole point! Drumming, whether it be with a drum set, on a bucket, or with hands on a table, is an ideal way to release pent-up negative feelings, and it is especially good for children because it is uncomplicated – it requires basic rhythm and something to hit. It does not require the intricate coordination of fingers on strings or breathing patterns into a mouthpiece. Bush (2008) also points out that music as a means of therapy is very useful because people in need of therapy often do not feel comfortable discussing their innermost feelings verbally. That is why music is so ideal: it is a means of expression, like words, yet it does not require verbalization of feelings. It is much more simple and instinctual.

Mikenas (2003) discusses how research has shown that drumming is used in a variety of therapies, including anger management and that it develops a sense of leadership and control. And this is a major reason why learning an instrument like the drums is not just a good release of negativity, but a chance for the child, especially those victimized by trauma, to find a means of control – not just of their instrument, but of themselves. Trauma can bring about anger because the victim feels out of control, helpless. Drumming is a way to regain that control and learn self-discipline.

The *American Music Therapy Association* (2004) tells us that music as a therapy can even be written into student's IEPs. This musical means of therapy and managing negative feelings is most certainly an important and effective way to intervene with children who suffer in many regards, especially those who have trouble dealing with negative feelings in general or such feelings that are associated with trauma.

I chose the specific I did child for this intervention because he had recently been robbed at gunpoint (stripped down to his underwear) and had \$700 worth of clothes and

personal items taken. Needless to say, he has been very angry and frustrated day to day, which has manifested itself in his class work, his demeanor, and his relation to peers and adults. I had already been working on drum set drumming with this child, but only in a very basic sense, and I realized that I had never shown him what basic rhythm actually is and how to utilize note values. I thought that incorporating these specific aspects of music theory and percussion into an intervention would be beneficial because of the therapeutic implications that drumming (and all music) can have. It turns out I was right. And that brought me back to when I was an angry adolescent first learning to play the drums. I would come home after a frustrating day at school or from a conflict with a peer or my parents, and I would simply turn my brain off and let loose on my drum set, which was happy to take my beating. I can vividly recall how much better I'd feel after a session behind my set. This is a perfect way for anyone to deal with negative feelings and self-destructive behaviors because, as Bush (2004) pointed out above, sometimes talking it out just doesn't cut it.

## References

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