

Therapeutic Drumming in Schools

Ripple Effects Beyond the Classroom

When you think about it, we have all experienced the power of rhythmic beats even before we were born. That's right, it's the mother's heartbeat that helps comfort the growing fetus through pregnancy.

It's little wonder then, that cultures around the world have used drumming to bring people together for centuries. In the modern era, therapeutic drumming draws on this ancient wisdom and the latest research to break down communication barriers and to enhance social emotional learning.

Therapeutic drumming has been proven to work effectively, particularly in schools. Research indicates that it has resulted in a 50% decrease in discipline incidents and a 30% increase in school attendance.

Beyond just statistics, case studies show how therapeutic drumming can help change student behaviour. A year 5 student was known for being physically violent expressed her anger by hitting things daily – walls, her desk, sometimes other students. On the first day of a drumming session, she got up in her facilitator's face and said, "Miss! This year I'm gonna hit drums instead of people!" And to her credit, she did just that.


Teachers and senior leaders explain that therapeutic drumming has a 'ripple effect' across the school. As the negative behaviour incidents decrease and positive behaviour increases, teachers can spend more quality time teaching, feel less stressed and as a result, are more engaged in their teaching.

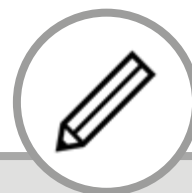
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Children experience a less disruptive class, affording greater opportunities for learning. Parents respond positively, noticing positive behavioural change. Academically, participants are reported as having greater focus and increased self-directed learning.



The 'ripple' effect on the community continues. It is the music making process and reflection as the conduit for social and emotional intelligence, increasing students' competency in self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making. All these skills are critical to positive community engagement and offer 'protective' resilience factors to at-risk behaviours such as school dropout, criminal activity and susceptibility to alcohol and other drug use.

Many schools across Australia and in the USA have discovered the power of therapeutic drumming. One teacher said, "We incorporate a lot of how to use these skills in the classroom. So you know we use the drums, but we also talk about the terms and the rhythm and the harmony in everyday life. What should they do if they found themselves out of rhythm, out of beat, out of harmony with others?" 



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Holyoake is a leading provider of counselling and support services for those affected directly and indirectly by alcohol and/or other drugs. It also operates DRUMBEAT, an evidence-based therapeutic program that is making a positive impact around the world.

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