

## Mental Health

### And University Music Students Part 2

By E. L. Lancaster, NCTM

**P**art 1 of this column in the February/March 2022 issue of *American Music Teacher* discussed the increase of mental health issues over the years and how the COVID-19 pandemic had contributed to this increase. This column continues to explore mental health issues by examining four studies related to research on mental health of university students, the impact of COVID upon the mental health of college students and mental health among university music students. Key results of each study are highlighted with the hope that readers who are interested in further information will read the complete studies.

#### Study No. 1

Hernández-Torrano, Daniel, Laura Ibrayeva, Jason Splarks, Natalya Lim, Alessandra Clementi, Ainur Almukhambetova, Yerden Nurtayev, and Ainur Muratkyzy. June 2020. "Mental Health and Well-Being of University Students: A Bibliometric Mapping of the Literature." *Frontiers of Psychology*, Vol. 11, Article 1226. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2020.01226>

This study explores the literature on mental health and well-being of university students using data from 5,561 journal articles from the period 1975–2020. The researchers found that research has increased during these years and especially after 2010. Researchers were from diverse geographical regions with about 50% of the research originating in the United States. Results are mainly reported in journals of psychology, psychiatry and education. The topics most frequently covered were positive mental health, mental disorders, substance abuse, counseling, stigma, stress and mental health measurement.



## Study No. 2

Son, Changwon, Sudeep Hegde, Alec Smith, Xizomei Wang, and Farzaon Sasangohar. 2020. "Effects of Covid-19 on College Students' Mental Health in the United States: Interview Survey Study." *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, Vol. 22, Issue 9. <https://www.jmir.org/2020/9/e21279>

Students (n=249) from a large university were interviewed a month after the campus was closed and a stay-at-home order was issued. Of these students, 71% indicated that stress and anxiety had increased due to

the pandemic. The most frequently expressed worries related to the students' health, the health of loved ones, difficulty in concentrating, disruptions to sleep patterns, increased concerns about academic performance and decreased social activity due to social distancing. A large majority of students used self-management coping mechanisms (both positive and negative) while about 34% communicated with family and friends to deal with stress and anxiety. Only 10% of the students with stress and anxiety sought mental health counseling services.

## Study No. 3

Gilbert, Danni. 2021. "A Comparison of Self-Reported Anxiety and Depression Among Undergraduate Music Majors and Nonmusic Majors." *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, Vol. 30(3) 69–83. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10570837211021048>.

Students in this study were from a small, private liberal arts university in the Midwest of America with participants including music majors and nonmajors. Questionnaires related to anxiety and depression that were designed by psychiatrist David Burns were used to obtain information. Music majors reported significantly higher levels of anxiety and depression than non-music majors. Music majors tended to report severe anxiety and moderate depression, while non-majors reported both mild anxiety and mild depression. Levels of anxiety and depression were similar for lowerclassmen and upperclassmen. Students who had elevated levels of anxiety also reported more intense symptoms of depression.

## Study No. 4

Koops, Lisa Huisman and Christa R. Kuebel. 2021. "Self-Reported Mental Health and Mental Illness Among University Music Students



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in the United States.” *Research Studies in Music Education*, Vol. 43(2) 129–143. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X19863265>.

Using an online survey, music majors from various regions and types of institutions were asked to self-report on their mental health state. The questionnaire also asked about the students’ mental health literacy and included three open-ended questions about mental health as music majors. More than 85% of the students were majoring in performance or music education. A majority of participants indicated that they had experienced mild to extreme levels of depression, anxiety and stress. Many students were aware of university resources that were available, while some cited only limited appointments that were available resulting in long wait times to see a therapist. Challenges included the heavy workload and curricular requirements for music degrees and the emotional connection to music making and critiques related to performance.

### Conclusion

Since research on mental health has been conducted, there is no doubt that mental health issues have increased over the years. With the pandemic, the need for such research is crucial. In the field of music, additional studies are needed on university music students, but it should also be expanded to pre-college students, university professors and independent teachers. Who, among us, will be the first to respond to this need?

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