

Chapter 7

Drumming interventions in Australian prisons: Insights from the Rhythm2Recovery model

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There is a reasonably long history of drumming programmes in prisons throughout the world. From the United States to Taiwan, documented cases of drumming programmes can be found, which highlight the physical, emotional, social and easily accessible benefits of using drumming in correctional settings. In many cases, the choice of the actual instrument plays a key role in the participants' experience, given the drum's accessibility and strong social dimensions. The prevalence of these drumming programmes is not surprising, given that drumming is a form of music-making that has a very long history across a number of different cultural contexts. Drum circles have been used as part of healing rituals in many cultures across the globe, and drumming is increasingly being used as a contemporary therapeutic strategy (Friedman 2000; Wood et al. 2013). These therapeutic purposes have ranged from treating a variety of behavioural issues, such as anger management, team-building and substance abuse recovery, as well as increasing self-esteem and developing leadership skills (Mikenas 2003; Wood et al. 2013). As Wood and colleagues (2013) note, drumming has also been used in therapeutic interventions with specific population groups, including the elderly (Fleming et al. 2004), substance misusers (Blackett and Payne 2005) and prisoners (Martin et al. 2014). Recent research has also examined the impact of drumming on disadvantaged adolescents' mental wellbeing, psychological distress, post-traumatic stress symptoms and antisocial behaviour (Martin and Wood 2017).

These findings resonate strongly with a large body of research that has examined the long-standing percussion programme Good Vibrations, which uses gamelan percussion music from Indonesia in a wide range of prison settings (Caulfield et al. 2009; Henley et al. 2012). Digard et al. (2007) suggest that the positive benefits of participation in a Good Vibrations project can include increased insight and reflection, and also stronger cohesion in groups of prisoners. Caulfield (2015: 2) has found that for women in prison, taking part in a Good Vibrations project can reduce anger, worry and levels of unhappiness, and improve social skills; that said, reductions in anger, worry and unhappiness may be sustained in the weeks after the project, but evidence has not documented this in the long term.

The DRUMBEAT programme has been used for 14 years in a number of prison, community and education settings in Australia and Aotearoa (New Zealand). More recently, the model on which this programme is based has been used to develop interventions in prisons and juvenile detention facilities in North America and the West Indies. In essence, the Rhythm2Recovery model focuses on rhythmic activities that support collaborative and supportive relationships and lead to introspection on a range of life issues, including communication, peer pressure and social responsibility. Accompanying the resource itself are comprehensive training

programmes aimed at professional service providers in the therapeutic and educational fields, allowing a number of prison staff to be trained as facilitators. Both Rhythm2Recovery and the DRUMBEAT programme provide session frameworks that detail how to effectively implement the model to address an individual's presenting issues or broader life-skill themes, and as such present rare examples of manualized arts programmes offered in Australian prisons, providing an insightful case study for this publication.

They are also rather unique within the landscape of prison arts, as they are designed to provide clear outcomes that assist with correctional service delivery. This formal design structure also facilitates the measurement and evaluation of these programmes. Building this evidence base and its theoretical underpinning has been one of the model's keys to success in terms of uptake by prison authorities. In this chapter, we touch on the key elements of this rather unique model and approach to prison arts delivery, and outline some of the evidence that has been gathered to evaluate the success of its approach by other teams of researchers, as well as the Captive Audiences ARC Linkage team leading this publication.

History and programme theory

DRUMBEAT is an acronym for 'Discovering Relationships Using Music – Beliefs, Emotions, Attitudes and Thoughts'. The programme was developed in 2003 by Simon Faulkner from the Holyoake Institute, a leading treatment agency for those with drug and alcohol addictions in Western Australia. DRUMBEAT is a 'relationship' programme with a focus on social and emotional learning that utilizes hand drumming as a central part of its methodology and was developed initially to engage high-risk youth averse to talk-based interventions.

The DRUMBEAT programme is a formal but flexible small-group intervention run over ten sessions. Each session involves a combination of team drumming activities interspersed with discussions on specific relational themes. Subject areas include rhythm and its impact on life, harmony, communication, teamwork, emotions, identity, community, self-belief, peer pressure, risk-taking and social responsibility. The programme concludes with a public performance that is used to connect participants to the broader community and provide recognition of achievement. As Simon Faulkner recollects:

My first inkling of the potential for drumming as a therapeutic tool came when I noticed how prisoners who were avoiding the talk-based programmes I ran, started attending the drumming group and were often waiting for me to arrive with an anticipatory excitement. The drums reduce self-consciousness and allow for a level of safety missing in many talk-based prison programmes.

More recently, Faulkner has extended this model to allow for additional flexibility and to address a range of new subject areas. These include units that focus on identifying strengths, overcoming adversity and managing grief, as well as specific cultural themes that are tailored

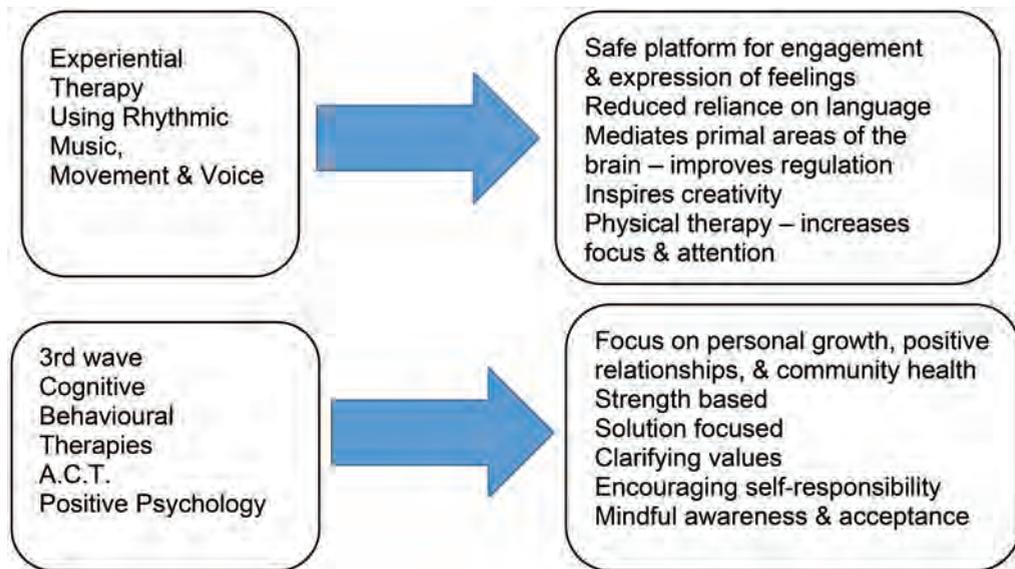


Figure 7.1: Rhythm2Recovery Model.

to the needs of First Peoples inmates. Feedback from those implementing the DRUMBEAT programme included challenges with maintaining consistent group membership and limitations for individuals who were unsuitable for group programmes. The Rhythm2Recovery model provides increased flexibility for clinicians within the prison environment, and has been utilized most recently by several forensic health units within Australia, in both individual and group therapy (Faulkner 2016).

The Rhythm2Recovery model combines rhythmic drumming activities with cognitive reflection and mindfulness. Each session combines fun rhythmic exercises and games with analogies that prompt discussion. The session content can be tailored by the facilitator to meet the developmental needs of those participating, adjusting the balance between drumming and discussion as required. Benefits flow directly from the rhythm-based exercises, which are designed to be readily accessible and easily accomplished. These include the many social skills that come from playing music with others as well as a cathartic element for releasing feelings and improved motor coordination. When combined with reflection using analogy that links the activities to real-life scenarios, the social learning and self-awareness are further enhanced. As a facilitator from Canning Vale Maximum Security prison observed:

Many of the prisoners I worked with felt a sense of social rejection or isolation and had a long history of relationship dysfunction – the group drumming provided them with a sense of connection to each other and many commented on the feeling of belonging and acceptance they had when they played music together.

The introduction of an arts element to the established group work programmes run by Holyoake happened by chance, but was driven by necessity. In Western Australia, 43 per cent of the prison population is Aboriginal, despite making up less than 3 per cent of the total population. Western Australia always had a higher incarceration rate of Aboriginal people compared with the rest of Australia, and according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics rates nearly doubled between 1990 and 2010 (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2015). Juveniles in Western Australia are 48 times more likely to be imprisoned than their non-Indigenous peers. This reality meant that Western models of rehabilitative interventions, which dominated the prison system, were unlikely to be effective for a large portion of the prison population and new strategies were required to engage those prisoners.

In the early stages of the model's development, the drumming element was included primarily as a means of increasing engagement. Drumming was attractive in its physicality, and the music provided a distraction from the confronting elements of therapy and encouraged teamwork. Increasingly, however, the drum has assumed a primary role in the approach, with its traditional healing role now supported by a growing understanding of the impact of rhythmic exercise and music on the brain, and its potential to improve brain function – particularly around emotional regulation (Chanda and Levitin 2013; see also Friedman 2000). DRUMBEAT was developed on the premise that drumming has the capacity to impact all levels of the brain, from primal regions that impact regulation, through the amygdala and its connection to emotion and relational interaction, and up to the cortex and its powers of reasoning and understanding.

These notions have been substantiated in the literature on drumming more broadly. In studies that have examined the impact of drumming programmes, participants have described the calming influence of being part of a drumming circle (Winkelman 2003), due to stress reduction (Blackett and Payne 2005; Friedman 2000). Emerging research into the neural development of adolescents suggests that innovative interventions that couple physical involvement (e.g. drumming) with other cognitive and behavioural elements can help to bring together experience and emotions that can create strong neural pathway connections (Norton 2010; Wood et al. 2013). Most of the leading trauma authorities now recommend repetitive rhythmic stimuli in response to this new neurobiological understanding (Ogden et al. 2006; Perry and Hambrick 2008; Van der Kolk 2014). Standard guidelines for trauma-informed practice also feature recommendations for these types of complementary therapies in recognition of the limitations of traditional cognitive approaches (ASCA 2102).

These insights resonate strongly with findings from other music interventions, which have explored the power of music more broadly to develop social cohesion and understanding between different communities, and address potentially tense or provocative topics through musical interaction (Baker 2015). For example, in another music-based prison intervention called *Changing Tunes*, music teaching, rehearsing, recording, performance, improvisation and composition are used to promote and support desistance from crime. Research into this programme has demonstrated considerable changes in participants' lives at the level of self-identity. Often angry and isolated, participants arrived at the projects with a limited and

limiting sense of their own possibilities. Similar to what has been documented in relation to DRUMBEAT, Cursley and Maruna's (2015: 2) research has found that involvement in *Changing Tunes* helped to 'wake something up' inside participants and showed them new possibilities for their lives. These changing self-perceptions led to a sense of agency and control, and a vision with hope for their future. This was due to music's power as a memory aid, which appeared to benefit the important journey of 'coming to grips' with one's past. This biographical reconstruction has been found to be crucial in the process of desistance from crime (Cursley and Maruna 2015: 2).

Why DRUM?

The drum is a unique instrument for therapeutic purposes, in that it's accessible to all. Very few musical instruments can be played with success so immediately and, given the low self-esteem often associated with people who have suffered significant adversity in their lives, this quality is critical. The most common type of drum used in these programmes is the African djembe; however, the programme deliberately avoids musical and cultural references to the drums' origins in order to avoid the dangers of cultural appropriation. That said, while exploration and articulation of the West African cultural origins is not part of the DRUMBEAT programme, the underlying cultural context and 'character' of the djembe no doubt implicitly impacts the ways in which the drum features in this programme. Instead, universal rhythm patterns are taught as a lead-in to an emphasis on improvisation and helping participants to find their own rhythms.

In cultures around the world, drumming has a long history within traditional healing practices, with different rhythms used to focus attention and develop energy fields associated with various types of transformation and connection (Price 2013). Although this is often dismissed by western health authorities, recent research from the field of neuroscience has shown how rhythm can positively impact primal areas of the brain damaged by exposure to trauma and in particular assist with improving emotional control (Chanda and Levitin 2013). The traditional hand drum is also an instrument that provides an individual connection to the natural world, being hewn from a tree and covered with animal skin, and this quality is often remarked upon by Indigenous inmates who find it comforting. That said, drums can also be made from recycled materials if prison budgets are low, and resources within the training programmes cover this method in detail.

Many prisoners struggle with low levels of self-regard, and the concept of 'shame' among Aboriginal prisoners often reduces participation when individuals are challenged beyond their capacity. The drum delivers a response and sound quickly, and can be thought of as a 'safer' vehicle for emotional expression and other forms of communication in the group. The drumming also provides a common focus for the group, reducing self-consciousness and creating a bond between participants. Similar social claims have been explored in the literature more broadly, where participation in group-based drumming has been shown to



Figure 7.2: Simon and participants. Photo: Simon Faulkner.

provide participants with a sense of group identity and group cohesion (Fancourt et al. 2016; Longhofer and Floersch 1993), positive socialization and experiences of accomplishment (Wood et al. 2013).

The use of the drum to replicate, release and regulate emotion is one of the most critical elements of the Rhythm2Recovery model. The drum can be used to help participants identify feelings, release them constructively and learn to manage them. Specific exercises are used by the facilitator to lift or reduce emotional energy and to practise reducing emotional arousal by reducing the intensity of their rhythm play. Mindfulness can also be enhanced through a focus on the rhythmic pulse and its alignment to the tempo of a mother's heartbeat. This specific tempo can be used to reduce anxiety, aligning many of the body's homeostatic systems (Chanda and Levitin 2013). As a male prison participant noted:

On drums I sometimes play my feelings. Like if I'm feeling down or sorry ... disappointed ... stressed ... inside me. It's good to control myself ... control conflict before I explode. Wait for it to go away with drumming.

(cited in Martin et al. 2014)

Initially, a simple range of universal patterns are taught to provide the participants with a rhythmic vocabulary and basic hand-drumming technique, then in the second half of the programme the emphasis shifts to finding your own rhythm and integrating that with the individual expression of the other members of the group – that is, improvisation. This provides a central analogy for the programme, which explores healthy connection between individuals and the skills, behaviours and attitudes that support this. Many of the individuals participating in these prison programmes suffer from isolation, a lack of social support and the inability to form healthy and stable relationships with others.

One of the exercises Simon Faulkner uses to examine community connection is to ask each player to layer in their own rhythm, one at a time. One person starts a rhythm and each member of the group adds their own part with a focus on aligning their rhythm to what has come before them – finding a connection. This teaches people how to listen and adapt their behaviour in order to connect with others. The group also uses this exercise to look at the importance of diversity and the value of tolerance in our communities.

Another central theme within the model that has a logical connection to drumming is *rhythm*, which is simply defined as a pattern and is subsequently linked to patterns of behaviour. The importance of stable patterns in our lives, and the trust and security they offer, is explored together with the challenges of instability. Fun exercises on the drum reinforce the importance of stability to healthy social connection, and this is cemented primarily through the central bass (low) note of the drum, which links the different drumming rhythms. The word 'bass' can then be extended to examine the importance of having a 'base', or foundation, to fall back on when faced with the challenges of life. Rhythms (patterns) are also explored in terms of 'healthy' and 'unhealthy', with group members identifying examples in their lives and discussing the challenges of moving away from unhealthy patterns such as drug use or domestic violence.

The use of the drum as a source of analogy and metaphor is central to the ability of the facilitator or counsellor to shift seamlessly between fun rhythm games and drumming exercises to insightful conversations on important social issues that are impacting the lives of the participants, their families and the broader community. In group work, the drum circle format serves as a replica of a family or community, and thus many of the social interactions observed by the group facilitator can be used to draw attention to issues that support or undermine relationships in these real-life contexts. As a male prison participant said:

Didn't used to connect to many people before – just the Missus and the kids. I had bad trust experiences in the past. But learnt how to trust others, connect with others ... I was surprised how much people opened up, came out of their shell, related to each other.

(cited in Martin et al. 2014)

Integrating evaluation into programme design

From its inception, the importance of ongoing evaluation has been a critical part of the drumming programmes developed under this model. Data-collection forms part of every intervention, and has informed changes on both the content and delivery of the intervention. Funding for arts-based programmes faces a number of hurdles, including a degree of scepticism from those unfamiliar with the transformative power of the arts and competing intervention models that may already be well established within the system. The incorporation of evaluation has had a significant impact on the positive interest shown by prison authorities towards both DRUMBEAT and the Rhythm2Recovery model, and has led to ongoing contracts by prison services both in Australia and the United States.

Many elements of the Rhythm2Recovery model have been aligned with current evidence on effective social and emotional development programmes and an understanding of the different risk and protective factors that influence an individual's trajectory towards or away from criminal offending. These correlations and the action-based research undertaken by each accredited facilitator have provided services with a substantial body of work with which to influence funders. In Utah, where the model has been influential in youth detention facilities, funding by the local justice authority was only approved after the tender provided independent evidence of its efficacy.

A study conducted by researchers from the University of Western Australia in seven Western Australian prisons between November 2012 and July 2013 indicated that DRUMBEAT improved mental wellbeing and resilience, and diminished psychological stress of prisoners. Mental wellbeing for DRUMBEAT prisoner participants was significantly higher. Survey and qualitative data also indicated that DRUMBEAT had a positive impact upon prisoners' emotions and emotional regulation, positive feelings, capacity to talk with others, self-worth, learning about themselves, feeling part of a team, self-confidence and social skills, relationship-building abilities, emotional barriers, connecting with others and forming friendships, and behaviour. While these findings are similar to research on other participatory music-based programmes (Caulfield 2015; Winder et al. 2015), they differ in being maintained at a three-month follow-up study. It was the developer's hypothesis that this maintenance may have been furthered by the reflective element of the programme, which generally is missing from participatory music programmes in prisons. All prisoners reported enjoying the programme and indicated that they would convey lessons from the programme to other prisoners, friends and/or family members. Key contributing factors to optimal programme delivery in the prison setting included the programme's structure, accessibility, style and flexibility; facilitation of interactions, connections, group connectedness and trust; unique nature; support by prison staff; facilitators; and consistency and stability (Martin et al. 2014).

Another element central to the model's success has been the ability of people with no musical background to both participate and lead the course. At the time of writing, over



Figure 7.3: Prisoner drum circle. Photo: Simon Faulkner.

5,000 professionals were delivering either the Rhythm2Recovery model or the DRUMBEAT programme; very few of them had any prior experience with drumming. Facilitators are given three days of rhythmic training and some extended practice time before they run their first programme, and the focus of fostering trust and empowering the group members is assisted by the vulnerability of the facilitator in this area and the fact that often the prisoners pick up the rhythms and exceed the facilitator's own drumming capacity over the course of the programme.

Experience has shown that having some kind of therapeutic background seems to be more beneficial to facilitators than having a musical background – in fact, problems have occurred with programme delivery when professional drummers with little therapeutic understanding have delivered the programme. That said, having competencies in both areas is most beneficial. As Bartleet and her colleagues noted in their observations of the programme in a low-security women's correctional facility, run by a music therapist, having those musical facilitation skills can allow for greater flexibility in musical improvisation and the development of polyrhythmic exercises, which can also lead to beneficial musical and social dynamics for the group. In Bartleet's observations of the programme, participants also seemed proud of their presentation and noted how their drumming skills had improved throughout the programme, and this confidence was closely related to the mastery of their musical skills, as well as their social skills.

Flexibility in design

The Rhythm2Recovery model has been designed to increase the flexibility of the original DRUMBEAT intervention, both to the needs of the group members and to the expertise of the facilitator. As mentioned above, in most situations programmes or courses of therapy are delivered as psycho-educational interventions by accredited facilitators with backgrounds in the education or health sectors. As psycho-education, the material explores common relationship issues and the learning of social and emotional skills without individual psychoanalysis. In prisons, interventions generally are delivered by prison psychologists, prison programme officers or contracting agencies such as a drug and alcohol treatment service. In one-to-one therapy, the material is utilized within a treatment programme, often combined with other therapeutic approaches. Individual work also often allows for more personal introspection, as in many prison group programmes prisoners are reluctant to reveal their vulnerabilities in front of other inmates. Likewise, when working with Indigenous prisoners, the concept of 'open discussion' can get complex in terms of kinship systems and avoidance relationships.

Flexibility also extends to session length, and the balance between the non-verbal and verbal elements of the programme. In juvenile detention centres, the average session length is one hour, with the non-verbal activities dominant – particularly in the early sessions. Too much discussion in the early sessions will quickly lead to disengagement; however, it is noticeable that as time progresses and the group bonds, the level of conversation increases significantly. Conversely, in adult prisons sessions are generally of two hours' duration with a short break at the halfway point. In adult groups, the level of dialogue is often equal to or greater than the time spent drumming, and too much drumming can in some cases lead to disengagement. The benefits of this kind of responsive engagement have been widely documented in testimonials from participants (Martin et al. 2014). As one male prisoner noted:

With other programmes you don't come away feeling good, not like DRUMBEAT where you do feel good. With DRUMBEAT, instead of the bad stuff being drummed into you it is being drummed out.

The non-verbal elements of the Rhythm2Recovery model are critical when working cross-culturally in prison situations. In West Australia's only maximum security prison, Aboriginal inmates who have committed serious crimes are housed thousands of kilometres away from family and country, which impacts negatively on their mental health. For many of these prisoners, English is their third or fourth language, and their level of comprehension in this tongue is low. For these prisoners and others with language comprehension issues or cognitive impairment, the non-verbal component of the model are important and include a sense of connection and belonging, reductions in stress and increases in self-esteem, levels of cooperation and collaboration (Martin et al. 2014). The majority of prison programmes offered to these inmates are heavily reliant on English language and literacy, making them inaccessible and often 'shaming'.

Many of the exercises Simon Faulkner has developed allow the participant to respond through the drum as a safe tool for communication. Instead of asking a direct and potentially shaming question, the facilitator uses the phrase, 'Rumble on your drum if you ...' Additionally, the drum is used to express feelings – the standard counselling phrase 'How did that feel?', which is often met by silence, is replaced with, 'Play how that felt'.

While we have outlined a number of the benefits associated with participation, these programmes are not without their challenges – particularly when located within a correctional context. In a study conducted by researchers from the University of Western Australia in seven Western Australian prisons between November 2012 and July 2013, a range of documented challenges were recorded. These revolved around session delivery timing, a lack of support from some prison staff, competing demands on prisoner time, prisoner perceptions of the programme and location and prison operational issues (Martin et al. 2014).

Addressing increasing mental health demand in prison populations

Since government policy changes in the 1980s that closed down many of the residential institutions housing people with debilitating mental health conditions and replacing them with a community integration model, there has been a steady rise in the number of inmates with a significant mental health diagnosis in prison populations in many parts of the western world (Witmer 1980). In Australia, nearly half (49 per cent) of all prisoners entering the system reported being diagnosed with either a mental health or drug and alcohol condition while a slightly reduced number of 44 per cent left prison with the same diagnosis; the rate was over 60 per cent for female detainees (AIHW 2015). Similar rates have been found in prisons worldwide, with the most common illness being depression and co-occurring substance misuse. Suicide and self-harm for prisoners are also well above the community averages (Fazel et al. 2016).

This rapid increase in mental health problems has left those authorities responsible facing major challenges, with a number of recent reports pointing to significant doubts about their capacity to manage this situation in a timely and effective way, and whether they are being allocated the necessary resources (Palmer 2005; WHO 2007). The traditional mental health responses of medication and psychological counselling are intensive, costly and often beyond the scope of prison authorities to administer with consistency. Additionally, the high level of prisoners from minority cultural backgrounds who have associated communication challenges makes for additional risk in misdiagnosis and ineffective or potentially harmful interventions (Palmer 2005).

A recent study by Fancourt and colleagues (2016) in Scotland and the large prison-based study by the University of Western Australia's School of Population and Health points to the significant potential of drumming-based interventions as a means to substantially improve prisoner mental health, with the results of these studies highly favourable when compared

with existing treatment models. Both studies found significant improvements in levels of depression and anxiety, as well as improvements in social resilience, with the Fancourt study showing no such improvements for those in the control group, who received traditional treatment regimes. Both studies also showed that improvements were maintained after three months (Fancourt et al. 2016; Martin et al. 2014).

The clinical team at the mental health forensic hospital at Long Bay Gaol, one of Australia's largest maximum security prisons, is one of several specialist prison-based mental health services that have incorporated the Rhythm2Recovery model into their practice based on this research and the many complications that work against traditional therapies within a mental health prison setting. As noted by Gemma Weeks, a senior therapist at the Long Bay Jail Forensic Hospital:

The Rhythm2Recovery programme was embraced by staff from the high-security Forensic Hospital in NSW, who could see the potential health benefits of drumming for the forensic patient population. While distinct from the correctional setting, the intervention fits within a trauma-informed and recovery-oriented approach to care, which is essential to contemporary evidence-based practice in this field. The non-reliance on high-level language or cognitive skills is also highly valued as it can be offered as a culturally appropriate and fun intervention to a large variety of clients.

Rhythm2Recovery and reintegration

The Rhythm2Recovery model places a high emphasis on social integration, and this focus has been utilized by a wide range of services to assist their clients to reintegrate into society after protracted periods of rehabilitation. Many of the session templates address themes that examine the challenges of moving back into community and re-establishing healthy social networks. For example, among the most common reasons for reoffending – particularly for young Indigenous offenders – is peer or family pressure to re-engage in criminal activity (Calley 2012). Exercises using the drum challenge people to hold onto a pattern of responsible behaviour (rhythm 1) while the remainder of the group try to draw them into a criminal pattern (rhythm 2) – these types of exercises allow inmates to share the real concerns they face upon release through a fun, yet relatable exercise. Other sessions focus on individual strengths and employing these on release to their advantage.

In the DRUMBEAT programme, the final sessions focus on teamwork and a performance. The theme of teamwork is used to highlight the capacity of individuals to work together, as evidenced in the programme itself, and connect the skill set utilized in doing this to opportunities following release – whether that is in the family, workplace or as a member of the community. The team, including the facilitators, may also become a future support network and provide encouragement and assistance for each other when facing future challenges. The performance element provides a concrete goal for the group, and is usually a

ten-minute drum routine played before another group of inmates and prison staff, or family members in some cases. The performance is often challenging – particularly for young people who may be highly self-conscious – but demonstrates what can be achieved when working together. The importance of this performance element resonates strongly with Caulfield's (2015) research into the Good Vibrations programme mentioned earlier, which also found that the involvement of prison staff, and the performance in front of an audience, seem to be important factors in creating any lasting impact, and completing the project positively changed the way in which some of the most 'difficult' prisoners were viewed by prison staff.

On completion of the programme, prison authorities are encouraged to make available recreational drumming time for graduates. The lessons on improvisation prepare participants for recreational drum-circle improvisation that is often used as an extension to the course. On release, prisoners can often locate recreational drum-circles in their region that offer an opportunity to embrace a new social circle and continue the pleasure of recreational music-making in a safe and healthy environment. Additionally, some organizations are running post-release programmes as means of assisting reintegration back to community life.

Adaptations for specific populations

The flexibility of the Rhythm2Recovery model has allowed for a range of programmes to be developed for specific populations or to deal with confronting issues. Faulkner has worked closely with Aboriginal counselling services and forensic mental health teams to develop targeted interventions for Indigenous inmates and for those with significant mental health issues. The adaptations include reducing the reliance on language and eye contact (in keeping with cultural aversions), and targeting specific issues including problematic drug and alcohol use and family dynamics. Exercises for the forensic mental health teams have also focused on using the drum to improve affect, and to increase energy and motivation for those who are heavily medicated.

Other adaptations include a Positive Parenting Programme and two anti-violence programmes, one of which focuses on domestic violence and the other on aggression generally. These courses fill a significant gap in these important areas, which currently are dominated by lengthy talk-based programmes that have high literacy requirements. Early feedback has shown that these programmes are more likely to engage young mothers and fathers with low literacy skills, and in particular those from Aboriginal backgrounds.

An extension to the standard DRUMBEAT format has also been developed to meet the accreditation requirements of several state Education Departments in Australia, and is used by the education units in several juvenile detention facilities. This format aligns with the national Health curriculum and its 'personal development' focus, and assists young detainees to graduate with their end-of-school certificate.

Conclusions

There is a growing body of research substantiating the claims and principles we have outlined in this chapter, both in prison settings and in a range of other community and educational settings. These studies highlight the importance of using accessible music models such as Rhythm2Recovery and programmes such as DRUMBEAT, and outline the flexibility and scaling-up potential they have for wider application in prison settings and beyond. The linking of experiential music-making to reflective practice and real issues faced by inmates in their social and emotional lives makes for both a highly motivating and transformative learning experience.

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