



South Gloucestershire
Music Hub

North Somerset

Music Service

Music Therapy and Wellbeing

Here I Am

Enabling teachers to support students' return to school, promote positive mental health & wellbeing and help students be ready to learn.

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HERE I AM

Enabling positive mental and emotional health, wellbeing and resilience following Covid-19.

Here I Am has been created by our Music Therapy and Wellbeing Team in light of our collected experience of loss through lockdown. It offers easy to use classroom activities to help support pupils' wellbeing, emotional and mental health and be ready to learn.

Children have felt loss in many ways: the loss of freedom, contact with friends, school life, leisure and social activities. And other less tangible factors which are important but less obvious: the loss of feeling secure in our environment, feeling relaxed with our friends, feeling confident to tackle the day ahead. Knowing that our connection with familiar people and places now feels different.

Here I Am will help staff and children acknowledge their different individual experiences of Covid-19 and take stock of the now for children. It is a collection of carefully sequenced activities to help teachers support children through these experiences, feel confident and grounded in class, and be ready to learn.

“ *The music made me feel calm* ” Freya, Year 1

THE PROGRAMME

We will introduce you to a selection of bite-size activities which teachers can use during the school day; the start of the day to ready students for learning, during the day to settle and re-engage and end of day as students step back out into the world.

What the Music Service/Hub staff will deliver

Half a day in your school, delivering:

- 3 x 20-30 minutes session with a group of children in nursery reception or year 1. These groups can be up to one class (30) from the same year group or a smaller target group; you know your pupils best – so we leave this up to you. Class teachers/adults must be present so we can demonstrate the activities and methodology to your staff.
- A 30 minute follow up at lunchtime or end of the day with staff/any adults who were in the session to explain the methodology behind the activities and how to repeat and extend them. This will embed the skills in the school workforce, enabling you to continue the work on your own.

What we ask of you

Just use the techniques and materials we offer. Daily, every now and again...whenever suits your need. Then tell us what works, what was the impact on your students...and share the outcomes with other schools so that we can share the benefits of music.

There is a small charge of £150.00 to cover the cost of delivering the session for your school.

“They love to sing, and we do this every day after lunch. ... the children love it and all join in. I really feel it helps them feel calmer and more settled.”

North Somerset teacher on the HIA programme

OVERVIEW

Here I am is about imbuing children with a sense of grounding through different activities with a musical element or stimulus as the thread that links them.

Here I am uses music because it is a non-threatening way in to processing a difficult time (as opposed to “let’s talk about...” which can produce anxiety). Musical activities do not need an overt instruction nor demand a specific response.

The world has been changed by Covid-19. Some would say we have all been traumatised to a lesser or greater degree. It depends on our experiences and our personality types if we agree with this, how we view it and how we deal with it.

Children may need strategies to help them readjust to quietness during restrictions or a busy classroom after lockdowns. With the right support, most will be able to find their own way through. For other children however, the effects are far greater depending what has happened at home. They may be experiencing anxiety and even have developed an acute level of stress.

Acute responses to trauma are often classified as fight, flight or freeze. Our brains are tremendously clever; if they cannot cope with an acutely stressful situation the thinking part of our brain shuts down which allows our brain stem – the ‘reptilian’ brain - to kick in and we go into survival mode ... we run away, hide (flight), hit out (fight/anger) or pretend we are not there or don’t speak, appear sleepy or literally faint (freeze/faint).

The purpose of this programme is to let children know that to feel a bit ‘out of sorts’ is not only totally okay, but perfectly normal. The impact of Here I Am will be relief and reassurance for children that it’s not just them feeling upside down.

Here I Am offers children fun, accessible activities to help regulate feelings uncertainty and anxiety. Teachers gain an extra awareness of behaviours children may be displaying which might signal concealed anxieties and a need for adult intervention.

Watch our taster video here to get a feel for Here I Am: bit.ly/33QWAXi

HERE I AM IS CREATED BY HEATHER WALTERS

MUSIC THERAPIST, MUSICIAN AND CLASS TEACHER.

I have always loved listening to and playing music, learning piano, cello and voice at school and playing in quartets, orchestras and singing in choirs whilst at University and beyond. My training was both in education PGCE (early years) and music (MA in Advanced Musical Studies).

Having taught in the classroom in mainstream schools for 10 years, I have an understanding of the pressures on teachers and the fantastic job that teachers do - I know how busy it can get! I trained as an EYFS specialist and taught full time in Reception year as well as Nursery. I also loved doing whole school singing and some music curriculum teaching throughout primary - to year 6.

In the middle part of my working life I trained as a music therapist (MA Music Therapy) whilst teaching part time in the classroom. For the last few years I have divided my time between instrumental tuition and individual music therapy sessions in different settings.

Two years ago, I was asked to write ***The Power of Music: The Magical Musical Mind*** project for the independent music charity Churchill Music. It is a rethink of how teachers and pupils regard music, showing the neuroscience that proves how incredible music is for humans and encouraging children to use music to help themselves and almost regard music in a non-musical way, as a tool to help us learn and channel our emotions. The human brain is wired to respond to music: isn't that amazing?!

Post lockdown I am teaching and doing music therapy again whilst taking the opportunity to harness these combined skills: ***Here I am*** is a product of all my musical experiences and training, educational and therapeutic and of course it is about my love of and belief in the special qualities of music.

“***I have a few boys in my class that find it really hard to be still and calm and sit without talking...***

...but when we do our music sessions, they all listen [and] join in.” South Glos Teacher on the HIA programme