

COVID-19 Psychological Factors and Lingering Pandemic Trauma



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Director, Janette Ogg Voice Research Center
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What we are talking about

1. How many of us were affected by COVID-19?
2. Psychological costs of the pandemic
3. Singers and stress
 - a) Anxiety
 - b) Depression
 - c) Grief
4. How to support singers post-pandemic

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1. How many of us were affected by COVID-19?

USA population : 331,449,281

COVID-19 cases reported in the USA: 33,558,862 (**10.12% of the population**)

COVID-19 deaths reported in the USA: 602,275



Sources:

April 1, 2020, the U.S. Census Bureau. “Table A. Apportionment Population, Resident Population, and Overseas Population: 2020 Census and 2010 Census”

COVID-19 Dashboard by the Center for Systems
Science and Engineering (CSSE) at Johns
Hopkins University (JHU)

<https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>
accessed 6/22/21

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1. How many of us were affected by COVID-19?

One in ten persons in the USA contracted COVID-19
of these one person per 56 cases died of COVID-19)



Sources:

April 1, 2020, the U.S. Census Bureau. “Table A. Apportionment Population, Resident Population, and Overseas Population: 2020 Census and 2010 Census”

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2. Psychological costs of the pandemic

52,730 participants

Qiu J, Shen B, Zhao M, *et al*

A nationwide survey of psychological distress among Chinese people in the COVID-19 epidemic: implications and policy recommendations

General Psychiatry 2020;33:e100213.

doi: 10.1136/gpsych-2020-100213

Developed the COVID-19 Peritraumatic Distress Index (CPDI) to assess negative mood, cognition and behavior change, somatization, and hyper arousal and irritability.

Almost 35% experienced psychological distress

<https://www.pexels.com/photo/hands-with-latex-gloves-holding-a-globe-with-a-face-mask-4167544/>



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Individuals between 18 and 30 years of age or above 60, participants identifying as female, and those highly educated presented the highest CPDI scores



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Young people obtain more information from social media - can easily trigger stress.

(Cheng, Cheng, Huang Jun, and Liang Baoyong. "Psychological health diathesis assessment system: a nationwide survey of resilient trait scale for Chinese adults." *Studies of Psychology and Behavior* 12.6 (2014): 735)

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Other studies found female id participants faced higher risks:

Costantini and Mazzotti, 2020; Jahanshahi et al., 2020; Liu and Heinz, 2020; Zhang et al., 2020).

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Female respondents may have increased reactions to stress or be more likely to develop post-traumatic stress disorder

Sareen, Jitender, et al. "Risk factors for post-injury mental health problems." Depression and anxiety 30.4 (2013): 321-327.

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2. Psychological costs of the pandemic

1,123 participants

Olga Megalakaki, *et al*

Does peritraumatic distress predict PTSD, depression and anxiety symptoms during and after COVID-19 lockdown in France? A prospective longitudinal study

Journal of Psychiatric Research Volume 137,
May 2021, Pages 81-88

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsychires.2021.02.035>



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Prevalence of COVID-19 peritraumatic distress

Close to the 33–35% established among Chinese (Qiu et al., 2020) and Italian (Costantini and Mazzotti, 2020) populations.

Acute peritraumatic distress = strong predictor of poor mental health conditions 3–4 months later.



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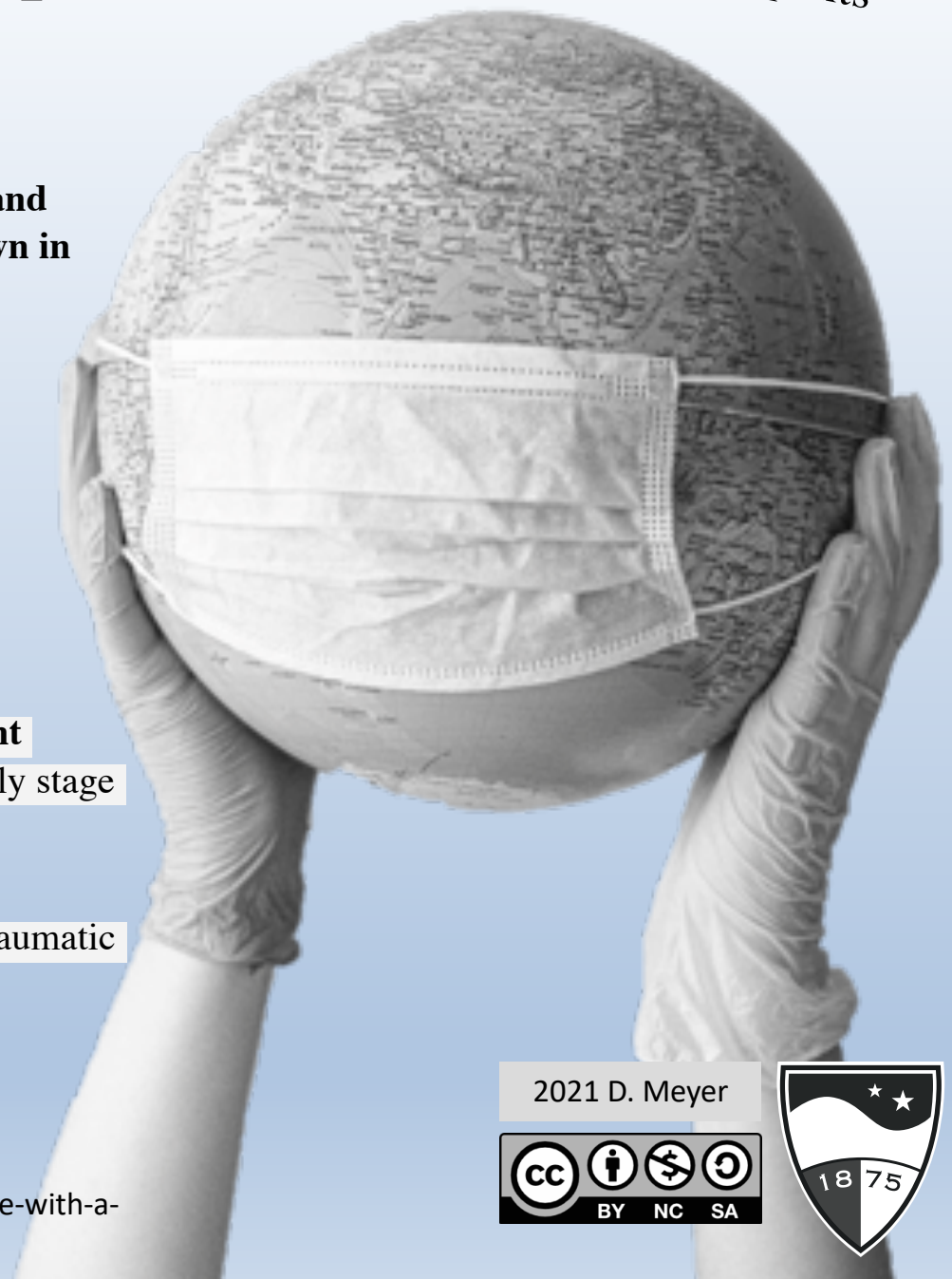
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsychires.2021.02.035>

Prevalence of COVID-19 peritraumatic distress

35.5% of the French respondents reported **significant clinical Covid-19 peritraumatic distress** in the early stage of the pandemic.

17.2% developed clinical cases of COVID-19 peritraumatic distress after the national lockdown was lifted

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2. Psychological costs of the pandemic

898 participants

Cindy H. Liu, *et al*

**Factors associated with depression, anxiety, and PTSD
symptomatology during the COVID-19 pandemic:
Clinical implications for U.S. young adult mental health,**

Psychiatry Research, Volume 290, 2020, 113172,
ISSN 0165-1781,
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2020.113172>

Respondents reported high levels of depression (43.3%)
high anxiety scores (45.4%), and high levels of PTSD
symptoms (31.8%).

Young adults showed high rates of loneliness during the
COVID-19 pandemic.



<https://www.pexels.com/photo/hands-with-latex-gloves-holding-a-globe-with-a-face-mask-4167544/>

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2. Psychological costs of the pandemic

Horesh, D., & Brown, A. D.

Traumatic stress in the age of COVID-19: A call to close critical gaps and adapt to new realities.

Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy, 12(4), 331-335. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/tra0000592>
<https://doi.apa.org/fulltext/2020-25108-001.html>

COVID-19 = a new type of mass trauma

Traumas such as war, assault, and natural disaster have been studied extensively

COVID-19 calls for a novel perspective about “what is trauma,” and what are its implications.

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COVID-19 calls for a novel perspective about “what is trauma,” and what are its implications.

This pandemic will exacerbate existing mental health disorders and contribute to the onset of new stress-related disorders for many

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COVID-19 = a new type of mass trauma

"COVID-19 is like an ongoing "cardiac stress test" on the world's infrastructures and systems, magnifying our every functional and structural vulnerability, including that of the field of traumatic stress."

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3. Singers and stress



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<https://www.pexels.com/photo/man-holding-microphone-singing-3388900/>

3. Singers and stress

Singers have unique psychological risk factors



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3. Singers and stress

Singers have unique psychological risk factors

Many singers cannot separate who they are from what they do (sing).



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3. Singers and stress

Singers have unique psychological risk factors

Many singers cannot separate who they are from what they do (sing).

“Performers in may experience a special intensification of psychologic distress in association with lapse in vocal health”

(or with the loss of performing due to the pandemic)

“Psychologic Aspects of Voice Disorders” by Deborah Caputo Rosen Reinhardt J. Heuer David A. Sasso Robert T. Sataloff in Korovin, Gwen S., et al. Diagnosis and Treatment of Voice Disorders. Vol. Fourth edition, Plural Publishing, Inc, 2014.

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3. Singers and stress

Stress is recognized as a factor in many types of illness and disease.

50% to 70% of all physician visits involve complaints of stress-related illness

Everly GS Jr. A Clinical Guide to the Treatment of the Human Stress Response. New York, NY: Plenum; 1989:40–43.

“Psychologic Aspects of Voice Disorders” by Deborah Caputo Rosen Reinhardt J. Heuer David A. Sasso Robert T. Sataloff in Korovin, Gwen S., et al. Diagnosis and Treatment of Voice Disorders. Vol. Fourth edition, Plural Publishing, Inc, 2014.

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Everly GS Jr. A Clinical Guide to the Treatment of the Human Stress Response. New York, NY: Plenum; 1989:40–43.

Endocrinologist Hans Selye – seminal stress studies (1930s) in animals

3 phases to the observed response:

- 1) Alarm – fight or flight
- 2) Adaptation – responses less extreme
- 3) Exhaustion (and often death)

Selye, Hans. "A syndrome produced by diverse nocuous agents." *Nature* 138.3479 (1936): 32-32. as cited in Ross E, Rush A. Diagnosis and neuroanatomical correlates of depression in brain-damaged patients: implications for a neurology of depression. *Arch Gen Psychiatry*. 1981;38:1344–1354.

Fun fact: Selye coined/popularized the term “stress”

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Endocrinologist Hans Selye – seminal stress ^{1^2^3^4^5} *Sound familiar?* in animals

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3. Singers and stress

Long-term stress -> negative physiological responses

Muscle tension (particularly in the head and neck)

Decreased ability to concentrate

Insomnia, chronic fatigue

Asthma

Immunosuppression

Increased gastric acid secretion (ulcers+ reflux laryngitis)

Myocardial infarction (aka heart attack)

Sataloff RT. Stress, anxiety and psychogenic dysphonia. In: Sataloff RT. Professional Voice: The Science and Art of Clinical Care. New York, NY: Raven Press; 1991:195–200.

D’Andrea W, Ford J, Stolbach B, Spinazzola J, van der Kolk B. Understanding interpersonal trauma in children: Why we need a developmentally appropriate trauma diagnosis. Am J Orthopsychiatry. 2012;82:187–200. 43.

DePierro J, D’Andrea W, Pole N. Attention biases in female survivors of chronic interpersonal violence: Relationship to trauma-related symptoms and physiology. Eur J Psychotraumatol. 2013;4.

D’Andrea W, Sharma R, Zelechowski AD, Spinazzola J. Physical health problems after single trauma exposure when stress takes root in the body. J Am Psychiatr Nurses Assoc. 2011;17:378–92.

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Korovin, Gwen S., et al. Diagnosis and Treatment of Voice
Disorders. Vol. Fourth edition, Plural Publishing, Inc, 2014.

Green J, Snellenberger R. The Dynamics of Health and Wellness: A
Biopsychosocial Approach. Fort Worth, TX: Holt Reinhardt and Winston;
1991:61–64, 92, 98, 101–136.

<https://www.pexels.com/photo/woman-looking-at-sea-while-sitting-on-beach-247314/>

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3. Singers and stress

Anxiety and voice physiology:

Changed respiratory patterns

Increased prevalence of lesions
(nodules, cysts, polyps, etc.)

Stress induced voice symptoms can occur
without physical pathology

The laryngeal nerve is sensitive to stress
Emotional distress can be like smoke
on the throat of a non-smoker,
causing muscular twitches in the
larynx

Monti, Elisa, et al. "What's in a singer's voice: The effect of attachment, emotions and trauma." *Logopedics Phoniatrics Vocology* 42.2 (2017): 62-72.

Butcher P, Elias A, Cavalli L. Understanding and treating psychogenic voice disorders: a cognitive behavioral framework. Chichester: Wiley, 2007.

Cacioppo JT, Tassinary LG, Berntson GG. Handbook of psychophysiology. 3rd ed. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Gillespie A, Helou L, Ziegler A. Crossroads of the respiratory and phonatory systems: where to go from here? The Voice Foundation, 43rd Annual Symposium, Philadelphia PA, 30 May 2014. Lecture.

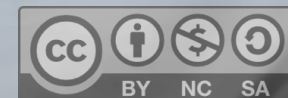
Kuo, Janice R., et al. "Childhood trauma and current psychological functioning in adults with social anxiety disorder." *Journal of anxiety disorders* 25.4 (2011): 467-473.

Kreiman J, Sidtis D. Foundations of voice studies: an interdisciplinary approach to voice production and perception. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

McGinnis AM, Milling LS. Psychological treatment of musical performance anxiety: Current status and future directions. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training*. 2005;42:357-73.

Siupsinskiene N, Razbadauskas A, Dubosas L. Psychological distress in patients with benign voice disorders. *Folia Phoniatr Logop*. 2010;63:281-8.

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<https://www.pexels.com/photo/boy-in-pink-crew-neck-shirt-eating-ice-cream-5867732/>

3. Singers and stress

Emotional/psychological effects can be confused with “technical issues”

Be aware:

A technical difficulty in the voice might be deeply rooted in emotional issues

Monti, Elisa, et al. "What's in a singer's voice: The effect of attachment, emotions and trauma." *Logopedics Phoniatrics Vocology* 42.2 (2017): 62-72.

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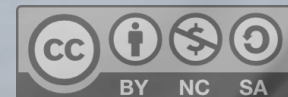


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3. Singers and stress

Singers around the world have experienced COVID-19 trauma

Loss of “self”

Loss of professional opportunities

Loss of interpersonal connection

Loss of colleagues/family members/friends

Trauma linked in the literature to:

Social phobias

Music Performance Anxiety (MPA)

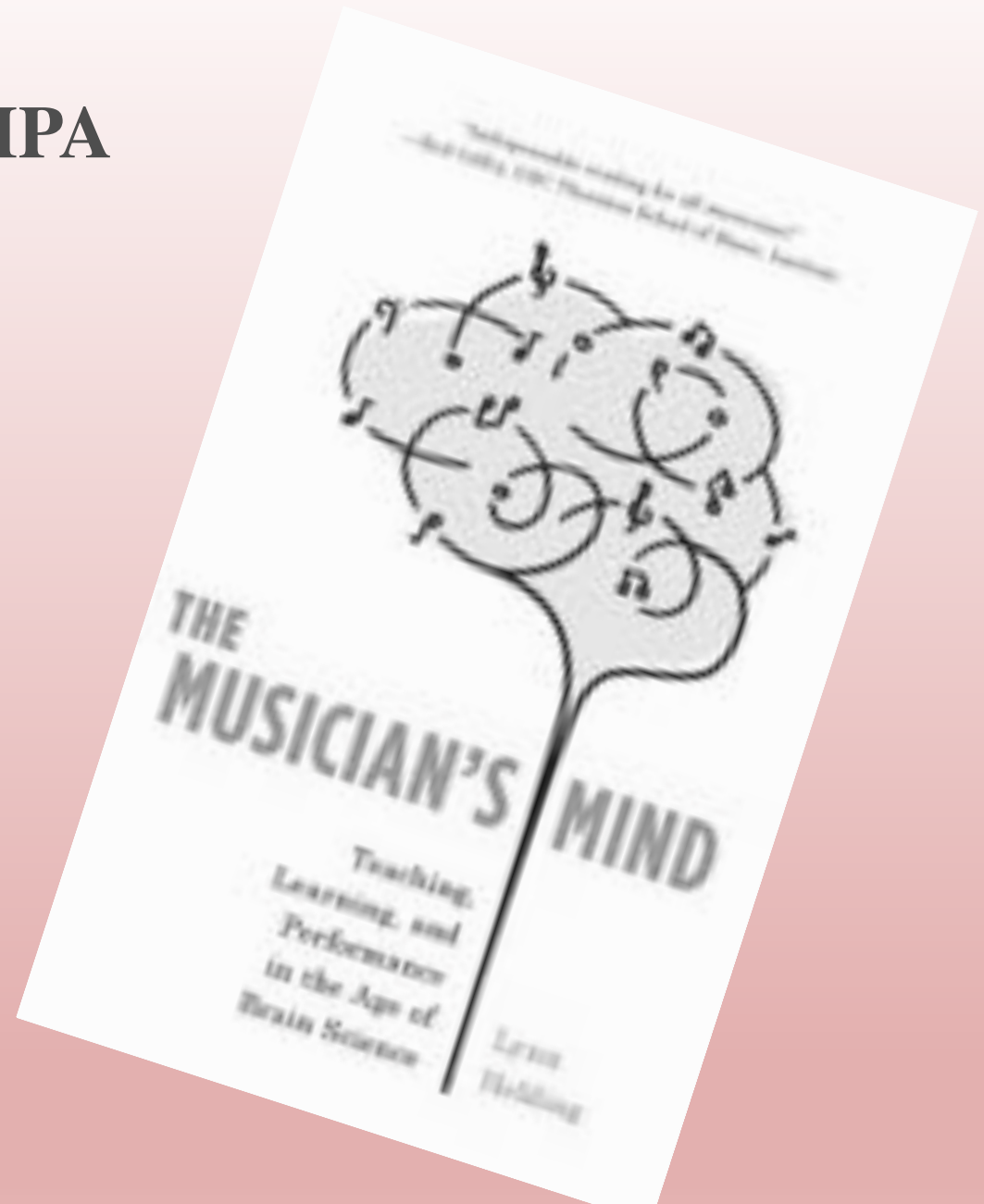
Depression

Grief

Reentry following the COVID-19 pandemic: epidemic levels of MPA, anxiety, depression, and persons experiencing grief

3. Singers and stress - MPA

Music Performance Anxiety –



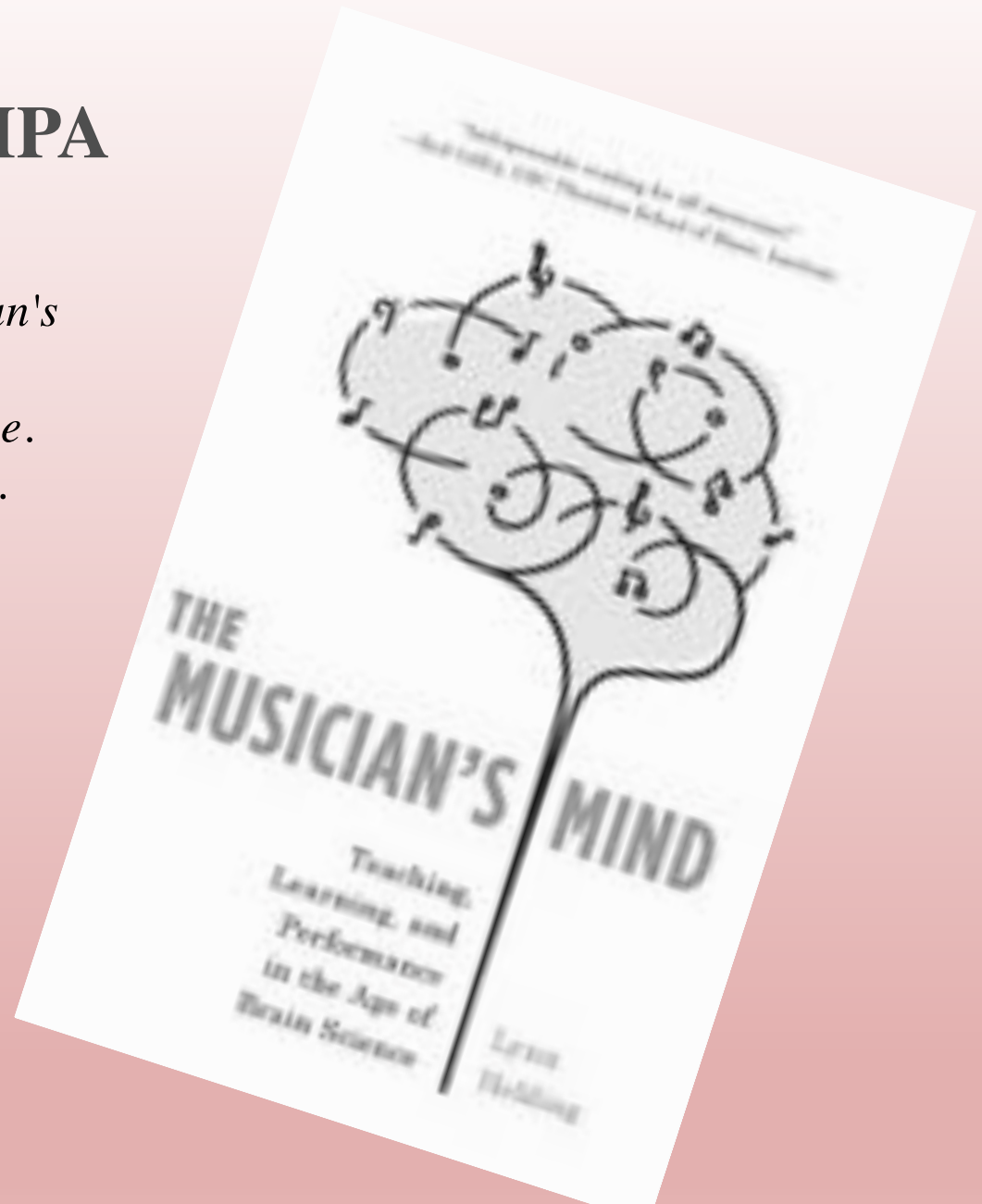
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3. Singers and stress - MPA

Music Performance Anxiety – see chapter 6 of Lynn Holding, *The Musician's Mind: Teaching, Learning, and Performance in the Age of Brain Science*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2020.

Excellent review of standard Psychotherapies for MPA, alternative therapies, and experimental therapies.



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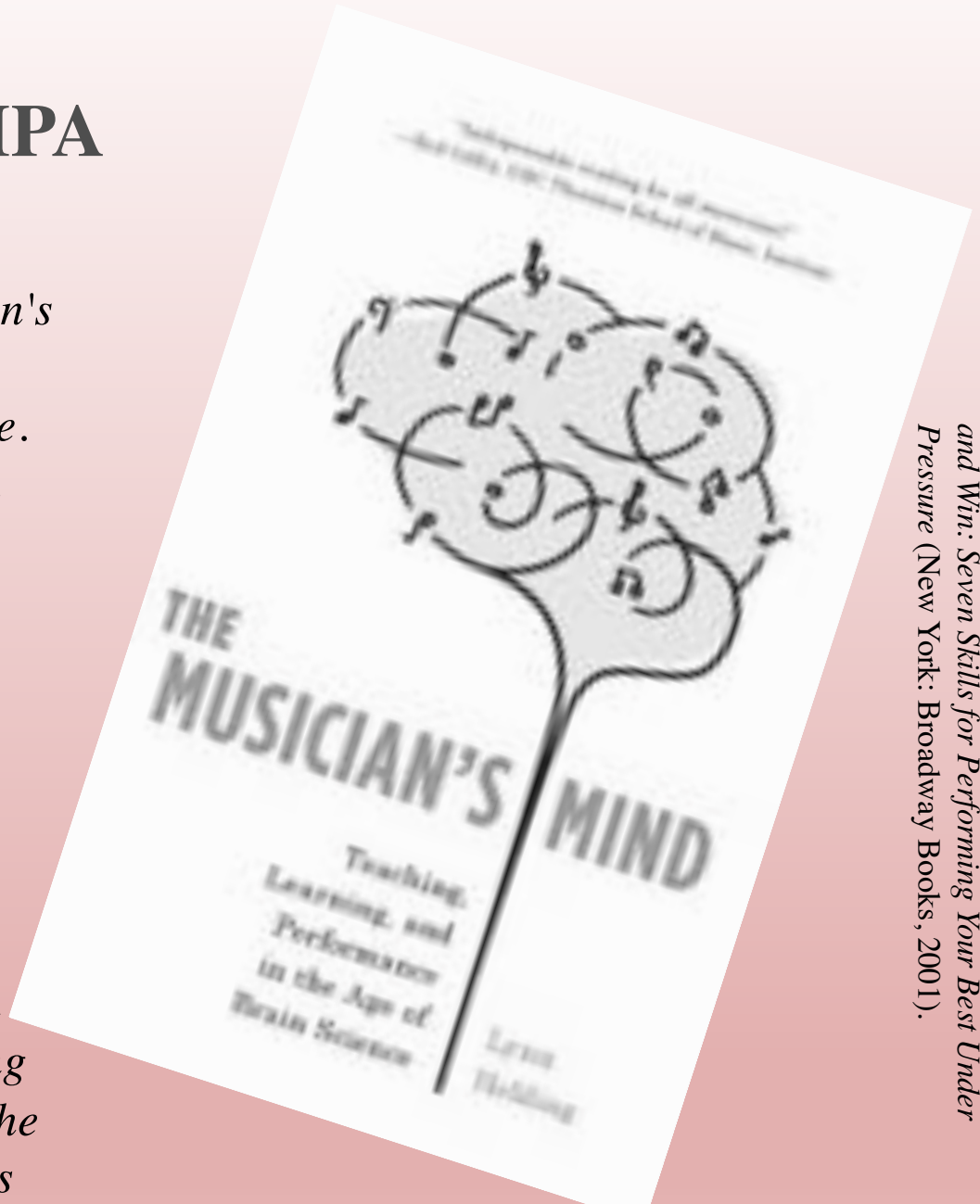
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Simulating the effects of anxiety:

Don Greene has musicians run or climb stairs to the point of breathlessness then immediately play their instrument or sing to habituate them to performing under the weight of such classic somatic symptoms as elevated heart rate, lack of oxygen, sweaty hands, and tight abdominal muscles.



Don Greene and Melinda Marshall, *Fight Your Fear and Win: Seven Skills for Performing Your Best Under Pressure* (New York: Broadway Books, 2001).

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3. Singers and stress - depression

Major depression - a common medical condition, with a lifetime prevalence of 17%

Depression Guideline Panel. 1993. AHCPR publication 93-0550.

Criteria for a major depressive episode:
5 or more of these symptoms 2+ weeks

1. depressed mood,
2. markedly diminished interest or pleasure in activities,
3. significant weight loss or weight gain,
4. insomnia or hypersomnia,
5. marked psychomotor agitation or retardation,
6. fatigue or diminished energy,
7. preoccupation with feelings of worthlessness and guilt,
8. difficulty concentrating or indecisiveness, and
9. recurrent thoughts of death or suicidal ideation.

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3. Singers and stress - grief

1. Accept the reality of the loss
2. Begin to live and cope in a world where the lost object is absent
3. Reinvest life energies in other relationships, interests, talents and goals.

Worden JW. Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy. New York, NY: Springer-Verlag; 1982:7–18. as adapted by Deborah Caputo Rose

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<https://www.pexels.com/photo/anonymous-sad-woman-sitting-on-floor-and-embracing-knees-6938741/>



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Some singers will be grieving lost loved ones, lost relationships, finances, singing opportunities, or even loss of vocal ability

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3. Singers and stress - grief

1. Accept the reality of *When in doubt: refer out*
2. Begin to live *(to mental health professionals)* where the lost object is absent
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4. How to support singers post-pandemic



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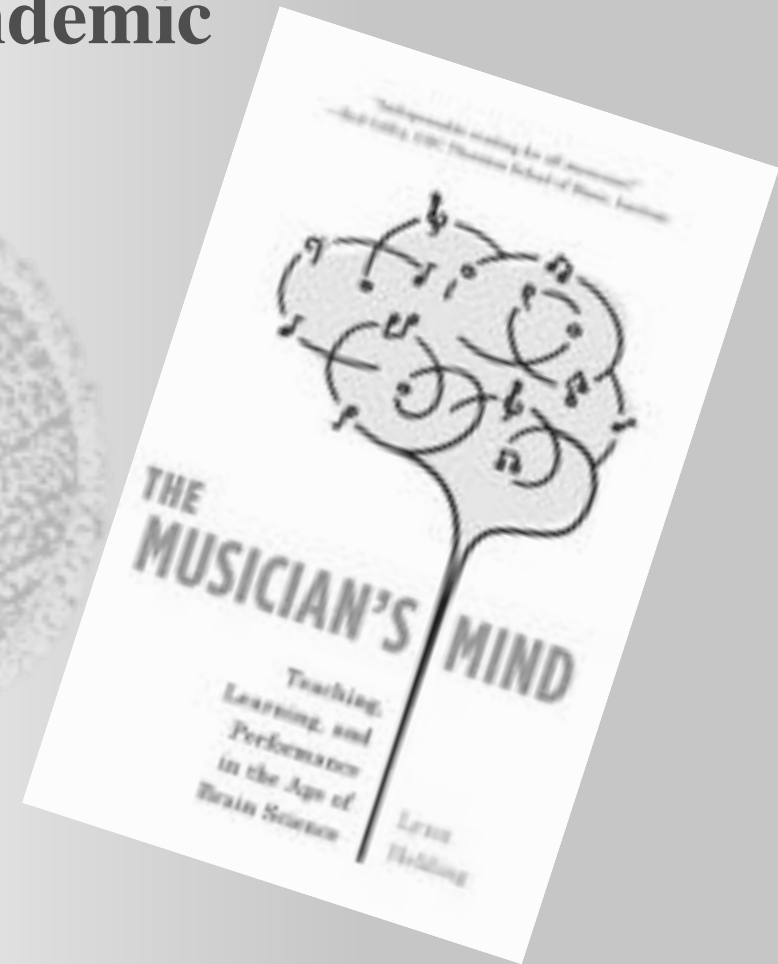
PUMP UP your EMPATHY

See chapter 8 of Lynn Holding, *The Musician's Mind: Teaching, Learning, and Performance in the Age of Brain Science*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2020.

Excellent review of the **study** and **training** of empathy:

Attention, like empathy, is flexible, indeed—and it is also fragile and fallible.

Music has the power to induce emotion, and emotion is a vital component of human existence, not least of which is emotion's power to instill empathy.



4. How to support singers post-pandemic

Build trauma awareness into your pedagogical practice

See “Incorporating Basic Trauma Awareness into the Voice Lesson” by Jess Baldwin

<https://singinginpopularmusics.com/2020/04/06/incorporating-basic-trauma-awareness-into-the-voice-lesson/>

BE
AWARE

4. How to support singers post-pandemic

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- 1) Prioritize your own self-regulation
- 2) Have a plan and communicate it*
- 3) Establish a connection ritual
- 4) Choose connection over productivity*
- 5) Validate their feelings
- 6) Cut things into smaller bites*
- 7) Show appreciation for effort (process > product)
- 8) Focus on positive resources
- 9) Be aware of the student's self-regulation
- 10) Encourage calm, fun, connection



*For more on **journaling, goal setting, and building connection** with your student: David Meyer and Lynn Holding, “Voice Pedagogy: Practical Science in the Studio: 'No-Tech' Strategies.” *Journal of Singing* 77:3 (January/February 2021): 359-367.

<https://www.pexels.com/photo/dirty-sign-industry-typography-7005410/>

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<https://singinginnonlarmusic.com/2020/10/15/trauma-awareness-in-the-voice-lesson/>

We never know exactly what someone is going through.

- 1) Establish a safe space
- 2) Have a plan and a signal
- 3) Establish boundaries
- 4) Check in regularly
- 5) Validate their feelings
- 6) Cut things into smaller bites*
- 7) Show appreciation for effort (process > product)
- 8) Focus on positive resources
- 9) Be aware of the student's self-regulation
- 10) Encourage calm, fun, connection



*For more on **journaling, goal setting, and building connection** with your student: David Meyer and Lynn Holding, “Voice Pedagogy: Practical Science in the Studio: 'No-Tech' Strategies.” *Journal of Singing* 77:3 (January/February 2021): 359-367.

<https://www.pexels.com/photo/dirty-sign-industry-typography-7005410/>

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4. How to support singers post-pandemic

Additional resources not cited:

Johnson, Grace Weber. "Singing and Childhood Sexual Abuse: Conversation with Voice Teachers" *Journal of Singing* 65 (2009): 143–153.

McQuistin, Lauren. "The Effects of Childhood Sexual Abuse on Singers." *Journal of Singing* 76, no. 4 (Spring 2020): 423-428.

Discusses the importance of trauma awareness within a voice teaching setting.

How common vocal techniques could be trauma triggers.

Discusses why traumatized students may struggle with kinesthetic awareness and sensation

Considerations for teachers re: student feelings, patience, and sensitivity.

Robarts, Jacqueline. "Music Therapy with Sexually Abused Children." *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 11 (2006): 249-269.

Wan, Catherine Y, Ruber, Theodor and Hohmann, Anja. "The Therapeutic Effects of Singing in Neurological Disorders." *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 27 (2010): 287–95.

Yehuda, Na'ama. "The Language of Dissociation." *Journal of Trauma & Dissociation* 6, no. 1 (2005): 9-29. https://doi.org/10.1300/J229v06n01_02.

SLP who focuses on teaching vocabulary as an important part of processing traumatic experiences

Grounding exercises, followed by verbal processing

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TAKE HOME MESSAGE

We have **all** experienced pandemic-induced loss

Pandemic-induced trauma, anxiety, depression, and grief
may be common with reentry

When in doubt, refer out
(to mental health or medical professionals)

Resources exist that can help the voice teacher build
trauma awareness into their studios

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TAKE HOME MESSAGE

*It's not what happens to you, but
how you react to it that matters.*

*When something happens, the
only thing in your power is your
attitude toward it.*

Discourses, 2.5.4–5 (paraphrase) Epictetus 108 AD



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TAKE HOME MESSAGE

You are NOT alone in any of this.

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NATS Voice Science Advisory Committee

Jess Baldwin

Kailee Fullmer

Lynn Holding & John Nix



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