

MUSIC TEACHERS NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Wellness Forum, April 4, 2016

MINUTES

Sharon Ard, chair of the Wellness Forum and South Central Division Director, brought the meeting to order at 2:13 PM.

The purpose of the forum is to discuss and present issues related to wellness in musicians and to present topics to the Board of Directors.

Announcements by Sharon: newest partner is the Psychoanalytic Association, Julie Nagel, director; Simply Stretch sessions by Jackie Herbein are offered at the conference; distinguished guests: Dr. William Dawson, retired hand surgeon and Gail Berenson.

- **From Julie Nagel:** would like feedback on the emotional side such as self-esteem and self-reliance. Teachers have one-on-one relationships with students therefore they are on the frontline for noticing issues. Without crossing the boundaries, how can teachers and psychoanalysts work together to help students – how to collaborate?
- Programs at universities for teachers to take so they realize the connection between the physical and the emotional.
- **From Gail Berenson:** expressed thanks and gratefulness to partner associations who are willing to come to MTNA on their own and participate in discussions.
- **From Sharon Ard:** new topic: dealing with a young student who passed away – how to deal with parents, siblings. Things along those lines would benefit some people.
- **From a forum participant:** someone talked about students who had family issues and the teacher was the person the students would share that with – honored to be part of the support system.
- **From a forum participant:** someone brought up how do you get a student to “feel” something, especially if the student is very young.
- **From Julie Nagel:** She said that teachers and students need to understand each other – matching imagery.
- **From a forum participant:** someone mentioned that ‘crying’ is a trigger to what is happening with a student. Try to be sensitive to where they’re coming from. So many different levels of collaboration.
- **From Dr. William Dawson:** treat the problem, then treat the reaction to the problem. Bedside manner; establishing doctor/patient relationship but not so much nowadays (so much technology) because not enough time. Frontline position of being a teacher – listen.
- **From Gail Berenson:** Check in with the student at the beginning of the lesson.
- **From Lois Svard:** she knew someone who had a vocal student who was having vocal issues; the teacher was understanding but the rest of the faculty was not.

- **From a forum participant:** Someone said that on her campus (St. Olaf), the accessibility services were extremely supportive in working with the student and the faculty. Faculty just may not be familiar.
- **From Gail Berenson:** role or responsibility of applied teacher to help the student find help and to tell the faculty about the situation.
- **General comments:** ideally, the music administration should be aware (edicts come from top down) – a resistance is out there. Health care just prescribes drugs and that's it. Medical community needs to present hard facts that teachers could use as reference. Evidence-based research not always reliable or up-to-date.
- **From Karen__Harrington_____** of Oklahoma: a report of what is happening in her area; she plays in the memory unit of a local assisted living community but the acoustic piano there is in bad shape so she was able to get a Clavinova and have that placed there. Teachers put songs that the residents liked on thumb drives. A resident there reacted to a song with tears. Another "woke" up when he heard a rendition of "Happy Birthday." There is a project now to put a Clavinova in every memory unit in Oklahoma. iPads with earphones are also being used with residents. Having a Clavinova there creates an ambience for both residents and caregivers. As for fundraising, a group approached the Chicasaw Nation to see if they would help fund.

One of her student's brother has cerebral palsy and wanted to learn to play – she (Karen) was able to use her Clavinova and its lights to have him follow them. Later, he wanted to start reading music.

- **From a forum participant:** someone has students who jiggle their legs constantly even when playing. Is this a manifestation of anxiety or perhaps medication? Dr. Dawson said it was a teenage thing – adolescence – a tension thing, not neurological. Discussion ensued whether a person is aware of it? Or is it automatic? Is the brain involved or is there some energy that has to be released? **(An aside here:** College students have no time to move – how can we get them to move more? Time constraints...) Question then: does the jittery legs bother you? A forum participant thinks it draws energy away from what the student is doing. Another forum participant thinks not but ask the student anyway.
- **General discussion:** How do we get music departments to realize the importance of wellness? If we get lots of money and presented that to music departments, would they use it for wellness? Also, 2 opposing uses for music medicine: Music as Therapy, Therapy for Musicians
- List of resources offered by forum participants:
 - *Stage Fright for Music Teachers* (proposed title, new book yet to come out)
 - *Melodies of the Mind* by Julie Nagel
 - "Musicians' First Aid" app in Spanish/English/Catalan
 - College Music Society on musician's health: a series of webinars with 6 topics due to come out in Fall 2016: vocal health, hearing health, etc. – starting to create a body of information.
 - PAMA website – referral service to physical therapists, doctors, etc.

Respectfully submitted,

Ginger Yang Hwalek
Eastern Division Director-elect