A Resilient Tune: Black Women in Music & Healing Advocacy

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Objectives

- **Science.** Understand the connection between music and individual/community well-being
- **History.** Understand the history of Black music as it relates to social and political discourse in America
- **Practice.** Examine and develop tools to incorporate music listening and creation into individual wellness practices, and community building
Mental Health: Expanding Our Definition

“a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community”

Source: World Health Organization
The Impact of Mental Illness

Approx. 43 million Americans experience some form of mental illness What’s the impact?.

- $147 billion in costs to the healthcare system [1]
- Third largest cause of homelessness in major U.S. cities [2]
- More than half of people who are incarcerated in the U.S. [3, 4]

What does your community need to THRIVE?

“We do a disservice when we yell, ‘self-care,’ at individuals who are in need of community-care.” – Someone’s Instagram page

**Individual Support + Community Conditions = Resilience**

- **PEOPLE:** Social networks & trust, participation & willingness to act for the common good, norms & culture
- **PLACE:** Look, feel & safety; Housing, Arts & cultural expression
- **EQUITABLE OPPORTUNITY:** Living wages & local assets or wealth

Source: The Prevention Institute: THRIVE Model
Assessing Equitable Access to Arts & Cultural Expression

- Where do you see space, resources, and freedom to express through art?
- How are the arts funded in your community?
- How can support for the arts be created, maintained, and expanded?
  - Theatres, gardens, murals, mosaics, musical and dance performances
- How are community members able to express their cultural identity through traditional/indigenous arts and crafts or expression that supports pride in their own heritage and traditional healing & wellness?
“Music does a lot of things for a lot of people. It’s transporting, for sure. It can take you right back, years back, to the very moment certain things happened in your life. It’s uplifting, it’s encouraging, it’s strengthening.”

– Aretha Franklin
Black Music (HER)story

“We cannot leave it to history as a discipline nor to sociology nor science nor economics to tell the story of our people” – Nikki Giovanni

Throughout generations

- Negro Spirituals
- Turn of the Century, Harlem Renaissance and post-Renaissance (1910 - 1940s)
- Civil Rights Era (1950s – 60s)
- Black Power Movement (late 60s – 70s)
- Birth of Hip Hop (late 70s – early 80s)
- Present Day
Negro Spirituals

When Israel was in Egypt's land
Let my people go
Oppress'd so hard they could not stand
Let my people go

Refrain:
Go down, Moses
Way down in Egypt's land
Tell old Pharaoh
Let my people go

Source: Fisk University Jubilee Singers (1872)
Turn of the 20th Century

- Red Summer 1919
- Harlem Renaissance (1920-1929)
- The Great Depression
- World War I & II

Blues & Jazz Themes:
- Great migration & travel
- Sexual & romantic autonomy
- Political and social dissent
- Social mobility

Pictured: Gladys Bentley courtesy of Smithsonian
The Role of the Artist

“The role of the artist is exactly the same as the role of the lover. If I love you, I have to make you conscious of the things you don’t see.”

– James Baldwin

Photo of Hazel Scott and Lena Horne, courtesy of Getty Images
Aint gonna let nobody*
Turn me 'round
Turn me 'round
Aint gonna let nobody*
Turn me round
I'm gonna keep on walkin'
Keep on talkin'
Marchin into freedom land
--
*Aint gonna let no jailhouse
*Aint gonna let no policeman

1950s and 60s

Photo of Mahalia Jackson courtesy of Getty Images
Music & Activism

“Alabama's gotten me so upset
Tennessee made me lose my rest
And everybody knows about
Mississippi goddamn”

Mississippi Goddamn by Nina Simone
The Global Black Power Movement

“... I contend that the cry of ‘black power’ is, at bottom, a reaction to the reluctance of white power to make the kind of changes necessary to make justice a reality for the Negro...”
– Rev. Dr. Martin L. King, Jr (1966)

Pictured: Sweet Honey in the Rock, courtesy of Getty Images
The Birth of Hip Hop/Soul (& Beyond)

“I think that we’ve got to see that a riot is the language of the unheard. And, what is it that America has failed to hear? It has failed to hear that the economic plight of the Negro poor has worsened over the last few years.” – Rev. Dr. Martin L. King, Jr. (1966)

Pictured (clockwise from top): Queen Latifah, Lauryn Hill, and Mary J. Blige courtesy of Getty Images
“Don’t be mad if you can’t sing along/just be glad you got the whole wide world... this shit is for us.”

– Solange Knowles (F.U.B.U. Seat at the Table, 2016)
Review

Community-Building Storytelling Healing
Your Resilient Tunes –

I belong and I am safe...
I am connected & creative...
I am confident...
I am compassionate to myself and others...
I can speak truth...
I am wise...
I am connected to a higher purpose...

*NSAC Attendees’ Playlist*
My (current) Resilient Tunes

I belong and I am safe: “Mvini (Rest in You)” – We Will Worship

I am connected & creative: “Good Energy” – Dormtainment

I am confident: “Brown Skin Girl” – Beyonce & Blue Ivy

I am compassionate: “EARTHA” – Jamila Woods

I can speak truth: “Freedom - Intro” – Jaz Karis

I am wise: “Grow” – Cecily

I am connected to a higher purpose: “High Rises” – CHIKA
Stay Bonnected - **Spotify Playlists**

- woman + black + carefree vibes right now
- black + forever in love
- 90s lituation
- tune in, tune out
- once upon a musical
- jazz + autumn
- ... and more
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Thank You!

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