

High Notes Music Program

Outcome Evaluation

Preliminary findings October 2024

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Executive summary

The High Notes Music Program offers a transformative opportunity for individuals of all ages to enhance their mental health and wellbeing through music participation. This evaluation explored the impact of the 10-week music program designed to improve participants' musicality, mental wellbeing, and overall health. We analyzed quantitative survey data and qualitative feedback, uncovering valuable insights into the program's benefits.

The evaluation of the program revealed overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants. Participants reported significant improvements in their musicality, with 64% scoring higher on measures of self-report music sophistication after the program. Furthermore, 73% of individuals experienced enhanced mental wellbeing, underscoring the program's effectiveness in fostering emotional health. Additionally, 55% of participants reported feeling less physically limited, suggesting that music-making activities contributed positively to their physical comfort and energy levels.

Qualitative feedback revealed that the program significantly enhanced participants' confidence, energy, and sense of connection, ultimately fostering a strong sense of belonging. While the program received positive reviews, many participants suggested extending session durations to enhance engagement. The gratitude expressed by participants reflects the profound, lasting influence of the program and its educators. Indeed, a reflection survey indicated that 94% of individuals agreed that the program positively affected their quality of life and promoted a positive attitude toward life.

This evaluation aims to inform the ongoing development of the High Notes Music Program and explore future funding opportunities, particularly for adaptations tailored to children. Such initiatives could amplify the program's impact, fostering resilience and social connection from an early age and supporting long-term mental and physical health benefits. The findings of this evaluation not only affirm the importance of music engagement but also advocate for its continued growth and expansion to serve diverse communities effectively.

Objectives

The aim of this evaluation was to assess the impact of the High Notes Music Program on the musicality (music sophistication), mental wellbeing, and overall health of participating individuals. In addition, by analyzing participants' reflection feedback, the evaluation sought to assess the program's effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. This process is intended to support the program's ongoing development and explore its potential adaptation for different age groups, including children.

Methodology

The evaluation of the High Notes Music Program incorporated both quantitative and qualitative survey questions. Participants were invited to complete an online survey at two key points: before the start of the program (baseline) and upon completion of the 10-week music program. By comparing the baseline and completion survey results, we assessed the program's effectiveness in impacting specific outcomes. This survey included three standardized instruments designed to assess these specific outcomes: (1) Self-reported music sophistication, encompassing musical abilities, behaviors, and engagement; (2) Mental wellbeing; and (3) Overall health. (See *Appendix A* for further details)

At the end of the 10 weeks, participants completed a reflection survey to assess the perceived benefits of their experience in the program. This survey included both Likert scale questions, allowing participants to rate their agreement with various statements regarding the program's impact, as well as the following three open-ended questions to gather more detailed qualitative insights:

1. What did you like best about this program?
2. Do you have any suggestions for how to improve this program?
3. Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experience in this program?

Participants

In total, 40 individuals filled out the reflection survey at the end of the program. Participants ranged in age from 5 to 71 years (30F, 10M) (*see Table 1* for a detailed breakdown of participant demographics). Among these participants, eleven individuals completed both the baseline and completion surveys, enabling a comparative analysis of their progress.

Key Findings

Baseline to completion (n=11)

1. **Self-report music sophistication:** After 10 weeks of the High Notes Music Program, **64% of individuals scored higher on a general measure of music sophistication**, indicating enhanced musical skills and appreciation after completing the program (*see Figure 1*). This improvement suggests that the structured music training contributed meaningfully to participants' musical

growth, with benefits such as improved rhythm, pitch recognition, and greater enjoyment and engagement with music in their daily lives.

2. **Mental Wellbeing:** The program positively impacted mental health, with **73% of participants reporting an increase in their mental wellbeing** scores after 10 weeks (*see Figure 2*). This improvement underscores the potential of structured music engagement to support mental health, likely providing participants with a sense of accomplishment, emotional release, and social connection that contributed to their enhanced wellbeing.
3. **Physical Limitations:** Additionally, **55% of participants felt less physically limited after participating in the program** (*see Figure 3*). This reduction in perceived physical limitations could be attributed to the physical activity involved in music-making which may have enhanced participants' physical comfort and energy levels.

Together, these findings reflect the holistic benefits of the High Notes Music Program, indicating that music engagement can positively influence not only self-reported music sophistication but also mental and physical aspects of participants' lives.

Reflection Survey

Perceived Benefits of Participation. In the reflection survey, participants evaluated the perceived benefits of participating in the program. On a likert scale from 1 (very much disagree) - 5 (very much agree), the most highly rated benefits were "*Positively affects quality of life*" (mean: 4.71), "*Promotes a positive attitude to life*" (mean: 4.69), and "*Helps make me a happier person*" (mean: 4.71), with 94% of individuals "somewhat" or "very much" agreeing with each of these statements. The lowest-ranking benefit was "*Releases negative feelings*" (mean: 3.48), which was endorsed by 63% of participants.

Qualitative analysis (See Appendix B for sample quotes)

Participants highlighted the positive emotional impact of the program, emphasizing how it helps them feel happier and more confident. Many noted that the program brings joy and energy into their lives, helping to combat feelings of loneliness. Several also expressed that the program fosters a sense of belonging, with one person specifically mentioning how the teacher's support makes them feel valued and capable. Overall, the program was praised for promoting positivity and providing a meaningful focus.

Participants consistently suggested extending the duration of the sessions. Many expressed that the current class length feels too short, with several specifically requesting that the lessons be increased to 45 minutes or an hour. This feedback indicates a strong desire for more time in each session to fully engage with the program.

Participants expressed deep gratitude for the program, with one highlighting how it provided an opportunity they otherwise couldn't afford. Many described feeling fortunate to be part of the program and emphasized the positive impact it has had on their emotional wellbeing, leaving them feeling happy, relaxed, energized, and optimistic. Several also praised the teacher's empathy and support, with one participant mentioning the lasting influence their teacher has had on them.

Recommendations and future funding needs

These findings highlight the potential for structured music programs to benefit individuals of all ages. To ensure the continuation and growth of this vital program, securing financial support is essential. Increased funding will not only help maintain its positive impact on current participants but also enable the expansion of the program to reach more individuals in need. Given the positive impacts on skill development, mental wellbeing, and physical activity observed in this program, offering similar music training tailored to children could foster resilience, confidence, and a sense of community from a young age. Future funding directed toward a child-focused version of the program could explore additional benefits unique to children, such as improvements in cognitive development, social skills, and emotional regulation. With targeted resources, the program could make a meaningful contribution to children's long-term mental and physical health, supporting their growth and wellbeing through the power of music.

Conclusion

Music participation is increasingly recognized as an effective strategy for promoting mental health and wellbeing in individuals of all ages and backgrounds. The evaluation of the High Notes Music Program underscores the benefits of music participation in enhancing music sophistication, mental wellbeing, and overall health among participants. By continuing to support and expand this program, we can harness the transformative power of music to foster resilience and promote long-term well-being in diverse communities.

SUMMARY FOR WEBSITE: An independent evaluation of the High Notes Music Program showed overwhelmingly positive feedback, with participants reporting gains in musicality, mental wellbeing, and physical activity. Qualitative responses highlighted increased confidence, energy, and a sense of belonging. Overall, participants expressed deep gratitude for the program's lasting positive impact and the support of its teachers.

Table 1. Sample and context

In total, 40 individuals filled out the reflection survey and 11 participants completed both a baseline and completion survey allowing for comparison.

Variables	Reflection Survey (N=40)	Baseline - Completion Subset (N=11)
Age		
● Under 18	8 (20%)	2
● 18-29	8 (20%)	0
● 30-39	8 (20%)	1
● 40-49	8 (20%)	4
● 50-59	3 (7.5%)	1
● 60+	5 (12.5%)	3
Gender		
● Women	29(72.5%)	6
● Men	10(25%)	4
● Non-Binary / other	1(2.5%)	1
Income		
● Less than 30k	10 (25%)	4
● 31-60k	8 (20%)	0
● 61-90k	5 (12.5%)	1
● 91-120k	2 (5%)	1
● 120k+	3 (7.5%)	1
● Prefer not to answer	12 (30%)	4
Years of Musical Training		
● No musical training	16 (25%)	1
● 0-0.5	7 (20%)	3
● 0.5-1	5 (12.5%)	0
● 1-2	4 (5%)	2
● 3-5	6 (7.5%)	4
● 5-10	0 (0%)	0
● 10+	2 (5%)	1

Figures

Figure 1. Individual Trajectories of Musical Sophistication from Baseline to Completion.

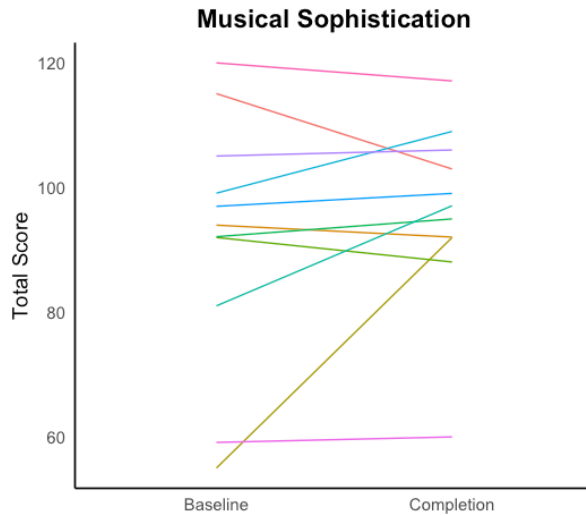


Figure 1. The figure shows individual responses, with 64% of individuals showing an increase in a general measure of musicality (Goldsmith's Musical Sophistication Index) from baseline to completion

Figure 2. Individual Trajectories of Mental Wellbeing Scores from Baseline to Completion.

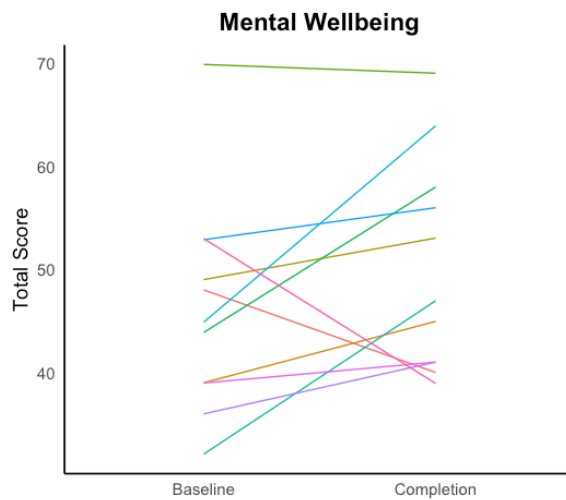


Figure 2. The figure displays individual responses, with 73% of individuals showing an increase in mental wellbeing scores (Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale) from baseline to completion.

Figure 3. Individual Trajectories of Health Limitation Scores from Baseline to Completion.

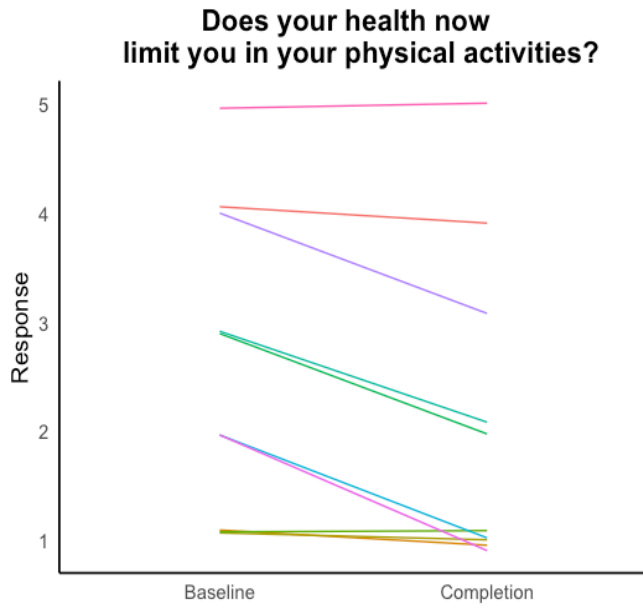


Figure 3. The figure displays individual responses, with 55% of individuals reporting a decrease in perceived health limitations from baseline to completion.

APPENDIX A. Standardized instruments

1. Self-report Music Sophistication: musical abilities, behaviors, and engagement.

Goldsmith musical sophistication Index (Gold-MSI), is a 39-item measure that assesses individual differences in musical sophistication. It measures individuals' ability to engage with music in an effective and nuanced way. It covers various dimensions of musicality, such as active listening, musical training, emotional engagement, and perceptual abilities.

Müllensiefen, D., Gingras, B., Musil, J., & Stewart, L. (2014). The musicality of non-musicians: An index for assessing musical sophistication in the general population. *PLoS ONE*, 9(2).

2. Mental wellbeing.

The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) is a 14-item tool that assesses mental wellbeing. This tool is commonly used to evaluate the effectiveness of programs, projects, and policies aimed at improving mental wellbeing in the general population.

Tennant, R., Hiller, L., Fishwick, R., Platt, S., Joseph, S., Weich, S., ... & Stewart-Brown, S. (2007). The Warwick-Edinburgh mental well-being scale (WEMWBS): development and UK validation. *Health and Quality of Life Outcomes*, 5, 1-13.

3. Overall Health.

Health Utility Scale (SF-6Dv2) is a 7-item tool that assesses an individual's overall health across six dimensions: physical functioning, role limitations, social functioning, pain, mental health, and vitality. It converts responses into a single utility score, which can be used to assess quality of life and inform economic evaluations of interventions.

Broderick, L., Bjorner, J. B., Lauher-Charest, M., White, M. K., Kosinski, M., Mulhern, B., & Brazier, J. (2022). Development of the SF-6Dv2 health utility survey: comprehensibility and patient preference. *Journal of Patient-Reported Outcomes*, 6(1), 47.

Appendix B. Sample Quotes

What do you like best about participating in this program?

“Music makes me feel happy and wonderful about myself. I feel lonely many times and music makes me smile... This program has given me new energy...The program has helped me feel more confident” (11, Male)

“My teacher makes me feel valued, capable and optimistic. I feel like I belong” (62, Female)

“Gives me something to focus on and promotes positivity” (71, Female)

Do you have any suggestions for how to improve this program?

“It would be better if the classes were a little longer” (37, Male)

“Maybe have the lesson for an hour instead of half an hour” (44, Female)

“I feel the duration of the session is a little short” (11, Male)

“Please make it a 1-hour class” (11, Female)

“I would like the class time to be at least 45 mins or 1 hour” (63, Female)

Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experience in this program?

“I am very appreciative of this opportunity as my parents cannot afford this opportunity for me. I will never forget my teacher and this excellent program” (15, Male)

“I would like to say I feel I am so lucky to be a part of this program” (11, Male)

“My teacher has been a huge support for me. He is so empathetic and nurturing... It leaves me happy, relaxed, energized and optimistic” (30, Female)