



— —
R O Y A L
C O L L E G E
O F M U S I C
London

Royal College of Music Museum

Music Helps Me Communicate

Teacher Pack

Summary

This sensory session supports communication, helping children to develop a better understanding of their emotions and supporting them to express their feelings, wants and needs using music as a creative tool. Learning outcomes include being able to:

Understand...	Think...	Feel..
... that communication is 2-sided (a speaker and a listener)	... about 3 key emotions through musical listening and sensory materials	... encouraged to make choices
... emotional vocabulary and Makaton signs	... about how to communicate their feelings	... part of a community in a group music-making exercise

Curriculum links

Communication and Language / Listening and speaking skills

- To have and enjoy expressive communication within their community
- To communicate their wants and needs, and have their voices heard
- To use a range of communication tools to enable inclusion
- Encourage children to understand their emotions and how they express them using creative approaches and music as a key to engagement
- Support children to express their feelings, wants and needs effectively through their preferred method of communication or communication aid

In this teacher pack you will find:

- Warm up call and response activities that introduce emotions as a topic
- Listening with sensory play activity
- Group music-making and composition activity

Extra resources

You will find our extra resources under *SEND Music helps me communicate* on our website.

Spotify playlist	https://spoti.fi/3fSdBGO
Story resource	In My Heart
Communication resources	Chat mat template Makaton vocab sheets

Feedback Form

Your feedback is incredibly important to us, as it helps to shape and improve our offer. Please take 3-5 minutes after using our resources to fill in our online survey and tell us about the experience.

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/X2FXWB3>

Warm up activities

Mimicking and modelling are great ways to introduce communication as a conversation between 2 sides. This warm-up activity introduces the idea of a speaker and a listener through call and response.

Actions

These actions are all good practice for releasing or expressing emotions. Imagine a steady 4/4 rhythm, or tap your foot audibly throughout. Model each action in time to the rhythm and leave a gap for the children to copy.

Deep in and out breathing	In for 2 beats, out for 2 beats
Big sigh	High to low sigh over 4 beats
Smile and clap	1 clap per beat whilst smiling
Stretch and shake	Stretch for 2, shake for 2

Extended: Choose a few of the children to create their own actions. They can become the 'caller'.

Sounds

These sounds are all sounds we might make when feeling an emotion. Again, imagine a steady 4/4 rhythm or tap your foot. Use the same model and mimic process.

Crying	High to low 'mmm' for 2, sniff sniff
Big sigh	Low to high 'oh' over 4 beats
Growl	'grr' for 4 beats
Laugh	A loud 'ha' per beat

Rhymes

These rhymes help talk about what we feel like doing when we feel a particular emotion. You can use the sounds or actions as a follow up if you want to reinforce how we might release or express an emotion. Model each line at a time and leave a gap for the children to repeat it back.

When I feel ANGRY
I want to shout
And stamp on the floor
To let my anger out

When I feel SAD
I want to cry
My face has got a frown
I let out a big sigh

When I feel HAPPY
I want to run
And smile so wide
Because I'm having fun

Listening with sensory play activities

Music

<https://spoti.fi/3fSdBGO>

Music is designed to help convey emotion and listening to it can help us express our feelings too.

Using a playlist of classical music, explore 3 key emotions: angry, sad and happy. The sensory options below may help strengthen the listening experience.

Angry music:

- Dmitiri Shostakovich – Symphony No. 10 in E Minor, Op. 93: II. Allegro
- Sergei Prokofiev – Romeo and Juliet, Op. 64, Act I: No. 13, Dance of the Knights
- Modest Mussorgsky – Night on Bald Mountain
- Gustav Holst – The Planets, Op. 32: I. Mars, the Bringer of War

Sad music:

- Samuel Barber – Adagio for Strings
- Edward Elgar – Serenade for Strings in E Minor, Op. 20: II. Larghetto
- Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky – Symphony No. 6 in B Minor, Op. 74 “Pathétique”: IV. Finale. Adagio lamentoso
- Gustav Mahler – Symphony No. 9 in D, 4. Satz: Adagio

Happy music:

- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – Violin Sonata No. 17 in C Major, K. 296: I. Allegro vivace
- Aaron Copland – Rodeo: 4. Hoe-Down
- Felix Mendelssohn – Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64, MWV O 14: 3. Allegro non troppo – Allegro molto vivace
- Percy Whitlock – Holiday Suite: Spade and Bucket Polka

Colour association

Colour can play an important part in sensory stimulation. Many people experience sound-to-colour associations which cause them to associate certain colours with certain musical pitches or sounds.

During this listening exercise, explore lighting scenarios or sensory toys and props that help children connect certain emotions, colours and sounds together. Colours could even become a communication tool by which they learn to recognise or express how they are feeling.

ANGRY	RED	ORANGE
SAD / CALM	BLUE	PURPLE
HAPPY	YELLOW	GREEN

Sensory play materials

How does the music feel or move? Encourage specific kinds of sensory play during the listening experience. They help children to connect touch or what they do with their body to an emotion.

ANGRY	Squeezy and stretchy fidget materials
SAD / CALM	Liquid motion, cold and smooth materials
HAPPY	Bubbles, lights and warm objects

Sounds

Musical instruments and sounds can help to reinforce

ANGRY	Short, loud sounds including banging and stamping Variety of drums and tambourines
SAD / CALM	Long, soft and gentle sounds Rainmakers,
HAPPY	Short, fast sounds Bells and shakers

Chat mat and Makaton resources

Chat mats are a low-tech communication resource that have been shown to support and increase the effectiveness of communication for individuals with additional needs, and they can be helpful for conversation partners as well.

Create your own individualised chat mats to help children say how the music made them feel. These may need the support of additional staff members.

Makaton symbols and signs can be used as a main method of communication or as a way to support speech. It has been shown to be useful for all sorts of people who struggle with understanding concepts, have poor literacy and communication skills, or speak English as an additional language.

By using Makaton, children and adults can take a more active part in life because communication and language are the key to everything we do and learn.

'Cool down' tips

Exploring emotions can be a rollercoaster! If you are struggling to wind down your session, here are some useful tips:

- Dim the lighting
- Put on some soft, calming music
- Try a bit of hand massage or some gentle waving with cloth materials

Group music-making and composition activity

Story resource

In My Heart (See additional resources)

Pick and choose from the following options as a way of creatively exploring the concept of feelings and emotions.

Sound painting

Use the story to inspire a sound painting with whatever instruments you have available.

Choose words or parts of the story to create some musical sounds, and allow the participants to show creativity as they respond.

For example:

- 'Loud and quiet feelings' = loud and soft sounds
- 'Heavy as an elephant' = stompy, slow sounds or drums
- 'As quiet as snowfall' = soft blowy sounds or rainmakers

Use the music to help express the emotions being talked about in the story.

Song writing

Use the words of the story to create a song or series of songs that the participants can learn to sing and sign. Encourage the group or certain individuals to:

- Feel able to make choices, perhaps about actions or the melody
- Take part in group music-making, have a role however small

Useful tips:

- Work towards a group performance of the *In My Heart* story over a period of time (a week or a number of weeks).
- Incorporate child-led call and response to encourage that two-way communication
- Use each verse or section to think about why we feel emotions (hungry, lonely, tired)

Extend:

- Add well-known songs so that it's not all new
- Learn some new songs with Makaton signing

For example: *Sing* by The Carpenters (https://youtu.be/Fiif_K40cV4)