

BRIEF SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAM

BEAT THE ODDS: Social and Emotional Skill Building Delivered in a Framework of Drumming

Program Description

Beat the Odds integrates activities from contemporary drum circles and group counseling to teach skills such as focusing and listening, team building, positive risk taking, self-esteem, awareness of others, leadership, expressing feelings, managing anger/stress, empathy and gratitude. **The program serves a whole classroom at a time and is designed for delivery by school personnel or individuals without musical experience.**

UCLA researchers have shown that *Beat the Odds* can significantly improve a spectrum of behavior problems in children, such as inattention, withdrawn/depression, posttraumatic stress, anxiety, attention deficit/hyperactivity, oppositional defiance, and sluggish cognitive tempo.

Beat the Odds is inclusive, culturally relevant, and does not bear the stigma of therapy. The program emphasizes process and not performance. It includes a therapeutic dimension involving guided interaction, self-disclosure, and reflection, and is delivered weekly for 40 - 45 minutes at a time over eight weeks. In addition, there is a booster session that can also serve as a demonstration session as needed.

This Program is feasible and sustainable. It is intended to benefit the entire school community and is not limited to any particular population. Third through fifth grade students are targeted in this Program because their peer centric developmental stage lends itself well to group-oriented activities, reflection upon behavior, and motor mastery. However, **this program can be easily adapted to any population, including teens, families, and older adults.** Many mental health professionals and teachers in the Los Angeles Unified School District have received training in *Beat the Odds*.

Key Components of Program

1. Sessions build towards increasing self-disclosure for promoting emotional awareness, empathy, and development of community.
2. Throughout the Program, instructions to students are carefully phrased in a positive perspective and with cultural sensitivity.
3. Whenever possible, the Socratic method has been used in the Program to elicit understanding, integration, and internalization of the lessons in each session of the Program. In accordance with Socratic tradition, the leader of the drum circle is viewed as the midwife at the birth of discovery; therefore, the leader is called a "Facilitator."
4. Student social and emotional behavior in the drum circle is reflective of behavior outside the circle. In this Program, Facilitators utilize inappropriate behavior as a therapeutic opportunity.
5. Classroom teachers are intentionally included as program participants in order to foster indirect benefits to students through stress reduction, observational learning, and/or carryover of session themes to the classroom.
6. Students improve over time and so does the Facilitator. Perfection is not expected of students or the Facilitator in any activity. This is not a music class. The way that the Facilitator accepts her/his mistakes and goes on to improve them serves as a model for the students.
7. It is important to deliver the Program in its entirety, in order to increase its effectiveness.

Research Findings

The Impact of Group Drumming on Social-emotional Behavior in Low-income Children

Ping Ho, MA, MPH, Jennie C. I. Tsao, PhD, Lian Bloch, MA, Lonnie K. Zeltzer, MD. UCLA Pediatric Pain Program, Department of Pediatrics, David Geffen School of Medicine, UCLA, pingho@ucla.edu.

Low-income youth experience social-emotional problems linked to chronic stress that are exacerbated by lack of access to care. Drumming is a nonverbal, universal activity that builds upon a collectivistic aspect of diverse cultures and does not bear the stigma of therapy. A pretest-posttest nonequivalent control group design was used to assess the effects of 12 weeks of school counselor-led drumming on social-emotional behavior in two fifth-grade intervention classrooms vs. two standard education control classrooms. The weekly intervention integrated rhythmic and group counseling activities to build skills, such as emotion management, focus and listening. The Teacher's Report Form was used to assess each of 101 participants ($n = 54$ experimental, $n = 47$ control, 90% Latino, 53.5% female, mean age 10.5 years, range 10-12). There was 100% retention. ANOVA testing showed that intervention classrooms improved significantly compared to the control group in broad-band scales [total problems ($p < .01$), internalizing problems ($p < .02$)], narrow-band syndrome scales [withdrawn/depression ($p < .02$), attention problems ($p < .01$), inattention subscale ($p < .001$)], DSM-oriented scales [anxiety problems ($p < .01$), attention deficit/hyperactivity problems ($p < .01$), inattention subscale ($p < .001$), oppositional defiant problems ($p < .03$)], and other scales [posttraumatic stress problems ($p < .01$), sluggish cognitive tempo ($p < .001$)]. Participation in group drumming led to significant improvements in multiple domains of social-emotional behavior. This sustainable intervention can foster positive youth development and increase student-counselor interaction. These findings underscore the potential value of the arts as a therapeutic tool.

A link to the full study, published February 2011 in *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, can be found at: uclartsandhealing.net/training.aspx. On that site, there is also a link to a documentary film clip of this work and an article featuring the study in the **Healthland section of *TIME* online on December 9, 2010: **How Group Drumming May Improve Low-Income Student Behavior**, by Meredith Melnick.**

Unsolicited Testimonial from a Psychiatric Social Worker in the Los Angeles Unified School District on June 26, 2009

Ms. Ping Ho,

My name is Carmen Lima, I am a Social Worker with LAUSD. Back in January you contacted me regarding the drumming to offer assistance, I was so nervous at the time!

I just wanted you to know that the classroom that I selected was an all boys class, several of them with serious behavior issues, a couple of the kids are on medications. However, once we started with the drumming, you would have never thought these children were nothing but well behaved young kids.

Dr. Gillenwaters, the boy's teacher was so taken by the drumming that she asked me to prepare the class for a presentation during "Dia De La Cultura Festival" (Culture Day Festival), we ended having two presentations on each of the two days the festival lasted.

Mr. Hooker, the school principal who stated "Whatever works" when I asked him if he would mind if I did drumming with this classroom, he had the widest, happiest smile on his face during the festival. Other teachers asked Dr. Gillenwaters, if these were the same boys she started her class with! The parents attending the festival were hollering at the end of each presentations, they were so proud of their children.

Best of all, was the camaraderie that developed amongst the class members. They will not miss school on Wednesday so as not to miss the class. A parent came early to pick up a student on the day we had the last class, this student refused to go and the parent had to come back an hour later when the class was over.

Now my principal wants more drumming classes next year!!!!

Thank you very much for encouraging me to do the class, also for the easy to follow directions of the curriculum.

I am looking forward to next school year, to more drumming and more happy discoveries!

Respectfully,

*Carmen Lima, PSW/PIC**

**Psychiatric Social Worker/Primary Intervention Counselor for Manchester Ave. Elementary School, a socioeconomically disadvantaged school in the Los Angeles Unified School District*

Unsolicited statement by Karen Timko, Coordinator of Primary Intervention and Elementary Counseling Services for the Los Angeles Unified School District – who arranged for all her counselors to be trained in Beat the Odds

As a supervisor of a counseling program in the LAUSD, I am always looking for ways to motivate, support, and rejuvenate my staff who are deployed in the schools hardest hit by the influences of poverty, gangs, drugs, and violence. They have responded with amazing enthusiasm to drumming and recreational music making. I am thrilled that several of our schools have purchased the drums and see the health benefits for themselves as healers and as a tool for facilitating healing and hope in our students.

As far as drumming and recreational music making, I know of no other intervention that has sparked the interest, enthusiasm, and hope in the counselors I supervise. The process seems to motivate the counselors to use the method with their students while bestowing measurable health benefits in the counselor delivering the intervention. It is a win-win for all involved.

The value of the arts in healing, whether through writing, dancing, drumming, painting, or any method of self-expression is experienced immediately by the client and virtually no "side effects". The arts have a way of touching the place within where the soul, the mind, the heart, and the soul converge, awakening the body's ability to heal itself and to come to terms emotionally with the meaning of the client's unique experience.

Graduation Speech by a 5th Grade Participant Reflecting Themes Addressed in the Program

The following speech was delivered by a fifth grade girl during the culmination ceremony at Napa Street Elementary School on May 30, 2008. The girl's class had just completed participation in *Beat the Odds*, the thematic content of which is evident throughout her speech (boldfaced). Two other speeches were also delivered on that day by students who did not receive the intervention; neither of those speeches included any thematic content related to *Beat the Odds*.

*Welcome Napa staff, students, and parents. My dream for the future is to be an artist because I like to paint fairy tales. I hope my classmates have that desire and that wanting in life to pursue their careers they want, as they grow up. I will remember my classmates because **we are a team**, we all have had good and bad times here at Napa, **sticking together we can accomplish even more in our upcoming challenges** that middle and high school will give us. Napa is the best place for people to learn, starting as early as kindergarten. One of the things I've learned is that **you have to care about each other. I personally learned how to be responsible** and to be mature and also **to own up to my actions taking responsibility for what I did wrong, an example would be helping my classmates when they need help. We are a community together. I thank my family for teaching me something new everyday**, especially my mom and dad, they have always been there for me, supporting me with my goals and dreams, and never giving up on me. I also want to thank my prior teachers and the Napa staff for teaching me their beautiful writing styles and principles of becoming a better person. In particular I want to thank two wonderful people, Mr. B and Mrs. Gilmore for giving me that extra push when I was down and motivating me to keep on going.*

Background of Study [Key points boldfaced] by Ping Ho, MA, MPH – Principal Investigator, & Founding Director of UCLArts and Healing

In academic year 2004-2005, with support from the Salamander Fund (Elle Nicolai, Founder/Director), UCLArts and Healing initiated a free, monthly educational program to explore ways in which various art forms could enhance mind/body health. One of these programs was *Finding Your Rhythm: The Therapeutic Power of Drumming*, featuring Christine Stevens.

UCLA outreach efforts attracted the attention of Karen Timko, Coordinator of Primary Intervention and Elementary Counseling Services for the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), who attended the program along with several of her staff. This ultimately led Ms. Timko to provide full-day training for her entire staff in therapeutic uses of drumming on June 8, 2005 at REMO Recreational Music Center in North Hollywood. Dance/movement therapist Lucy Gonda provided the necessary support for each counselor to receive a drum and an instructional book with rhythmic CD by Christine Stevens.

During the training, pre-post surveys were administered in order to determine the effect of the one-day program on counselor perceptions of the benefits of drumming, their likelihood of implementing a drumming program on campus, and perceived barriers to implementation. Ninety people completed the pretest; 49 completed pre- and posttests, for a 54% response rate. Results of the surveys show a significant increase in the likelihood of offering drumming during the school day (from a median of 2 to 6 on a scale of 1 - 7; $p < .04$) or after school (from a median of 2 to 5; $p < .001$). Results also showed a significant improvement in the mood of participants as a result of the program (from a median of 5 to 7; $p < .001$).

Major anticipated benefits for students included: stress reduction, self-expression, emotional release/management, cooperation, self-esteem, centering, and focus. Major benefits for staff included: stress reduction, team building, and burnout prevention. Funding for the drums was the greatest perceived challenge, with obtaining support from administration and other staff as the next highest challenge.

It was at this event that I met Giselle Friedman, LCSW, who suggested research collaboration, particularly considering that her Principal, Petra Montante, PhD, would be most supportive of this endeavor (as has been her successor, Principal Susan Babit). It occurred to us both that if we could demonstrate the effectiveness of drumming, we could facilitate administrative support for such programs in schools.

It made sense that the study be done with youth for numerous reasons: the importance of early intervention, meta-analytic research showing that social emotional learning significantly increases academic behavior and performance, the potential intrinsic and metaphorical power of drumming with youth, the absence of studies on drumming with this population, the potential to have a larger impact on society, and the relationship built with LAUSD Primary Intervention and Elementary Counseling Services. The necessary research support for the project could be provided by the UCLA Pediatric Pain Program, headed by Founding Director Lonnie K. Zeltzer, MD.

We discussed the idea with Remo Belli, Founding CEO of REMO, the world's leading manufacturer of drums. He thought the idea viable and provided the funding to make the study possible.

Having found Ms. Friedman for the psychosocial perspective, we needed one more person on the team – a rhythmic expert. We consulted Christine Stevens, who immediately recommended Mike DeMenno. The troika was now complete.

We set an unusually high bar for ourselves in designing this study. In the name of sustainability, we utilized a school counselor (Ms. Friedman) to deliver the intervention, and not a seasoned drum circle facilitator. Moreover, we opted to serve entire classrooms of a mixed composition of students at once, despite the fact that we would have had a much greater likelihood of achieving significant results by limiting the intervention to groups of 10-15 students at a time or by delivering it only to students identified as being "at risk." **Furthermore, we implemented the program during the school day after lunch** – a time of day known to be notorious from the standpoint of teaching, based upon previous surveys of elementary school teachers.

In addition, we elected to utilize a comprehensive assessment instrument that would yield 24 scales of behavior. This required experimental and control teachers to complete a 120-item survey for each student in her/his class before and after the intervention. In this way, we could get a broad view of the potential effects of the intervention and establish a strong evidence basis.

Finally, we decided to work with students in spring semester of fifth grade – the most challenging time of year to work with the most potentially resistant group of elementary age students. If we could achieve a significant impact on these students, it would certainly increase our confidence in the strength of this intervention.

The results exceeded our wildest imagination. We obtained significant results in 11 out of 24 possible behavior scales and, in nearly every one of these areas, improvements in behavior for the experimental group were accompanied by declines in behavior within the control group. The word "compelling" was used by both the statistician on our project and the documentary film crew that later witnessed the program for themselves. Subsequently, many mental health professionals and teachers in the LAUSD have received training in *Beat the Odds*.

This evidence-based intervention, entitled *Beat the Odds: Social and Emotional Skill-Building Delivered in a Framework of Drumming*, was designed to address the perceived needs of students, as cited by LAUSD Primary Intervention and Elementary School Counselors in June 2005. It was developed with the combined expertise of a licensed clinical social worker, a professional drum circle facilitator, and a public health educator. Therefore, the ultimate product is clinically sound, rhythmically engaging, and sustainable.

BEAT THE ODDS: PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Ping Ho, MA, MPH is Founding Director of UCLArts and Healing, which facilitates the use of arts-based tools for mind-body healing in the community as a vehicle for empowerment and transformation (uclartsandhealing.net). UCLArts and Healing is an organizational member of the UCLA Collaborative Centers for Integrative Medicine, of which Ping is a Steering Committee Member and was the founding administrator. She was also the founding administrator for the UCLA Cousins Center for Psychoneuroimmunology (PNI), which led to the privilege of writing for Norman Cousins and co-writing the professional autobiography of George F. Solomon, M.D., founder of the field of PNI. In addition, Ping has an extensive background as a health educator and performing artist. She has a B.A. in psychology with honors from Stanford University – where she was appointed to spearhead the still-thriving Health Improvement Program for faculty and staff, an M.A. in counseling psychology with specialization in exercise physiology from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and an M.P.H. in Community Health Sciences from UCLA School of Public Health. Ping was recently appointed to the Council of Advisers for the Academic Consortium for Complementary and Alternative Health Care, a national network of educational organizations and agencies in complementary and alternative medicine.

Giselle Friedman, LCSW is a licensed clinical social worker who is bicultural and bilingual in Spanish and in English. Giselle received her undergraduate degree from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and her master's degree from USC School of Social Work. As a psychotherapist, she has worked in school settings, agencies, hospitals and private practice, with a focus on children and families. Giselle spent four years as a treating and on-call therapist for Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center's Rape Treatment Center, Stuart House, and SM-UCLA Psychotherapy Group. She has been working as a full time psychiatric social worker for the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) since 2000. In this capacity, Giselle provides individual and group therapy to students and their families at several elementary schools. She also leads parenting classes and educates teachers and staff on topics such as children's responses to trauma, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, childhood depression and anxiety, classroom behavior management, and addressing bullying behavior. Giselle is a member of the school Student Success Teams, and she participates in her local district's LAUSD Resource Coordinating Council and neighborhood community meetings.

Mike DeMenno is Manager of Remo Recreational Music Center. Mike grew up in Los Angeles, California, in the center of the music business and has been drumming on pillow, pots and pans since the age of five. While always a dedicated student to the drums, he began facilitating drum circles for youth at risk, which led him to become Manager of the first recreational music center in the world - created by Remo Belli, founder and owner of Remo, Inc. Mike has helped to make Remo Recreational Music Center the most popular drum circle center in California. With drum workshops and drum circles almost every day of the week, including programs to reduce stress through drumming and a popular Saturday morning drum circle for kids, Remo Recreational Music Center is helping people have a happier and healthier life through drumming. Under the mentorship of professional rhythm facilitators, Mike has become a prominent local and international drum circle facilitator. Mike feels it is rewarding and humbling to touch so many people from kids to adults with music and drumming.

For Information About Beat the Odds Training Programs and Materials: Visit uclartsandhealing.net/training.aspx, email info@uclartsandhealing.net, or call (310) 452-1439.

The research findings on page 5 were presented to the American Public Health Association - 10/28/08, National School Boards Association Latino Caucus - 4/4/09, North American Research Conference on Complementary and Integrative Medicine - 5/13/09, American Music Therapy Association (AMTA) - 11/14/09, Western Region AMTA - 4/10/10, and Society for Arts in Healthcare - 4/29/10