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Dr. Carol S. Cohen
Chair
IASWG SPARC Program

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Dear Dr. Cohen:

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing with a final report for the IASWG SPARC funded project Fifth House Ensemble (5HE) Residency Programs with Teen Living Programs (TLP) (LUC Tracking Number 517665).

Project Description

Fifth House Ensemble (5HE), a nonprofit chamber orchestra and music education group, facilitated group-based music education residencies at Teen Living Programs (TLP) drop-in center and transitional living program in 2017. TLP provides housing and supportive services to young people experiencing homelessness on the south side of Chicago. Young people are quite passionate about music and spend time writing and producing original work. TLP staff note young people often do so in isolation and that they do not generate complete songs due to a variety of factors, including the lack of avenues to present and perform their completed works. The 5HE residencies addressed these needs by providing group-based music education, where teaching artists (TAs) worked alongside youth to develop original songs based on their life experiences, and subsequently design and produce performance events.

Residencies

5HE conducted residencies at TLP during spring and summer of 2017. TAs facilitated weekly sessions with young people. Residency goals focused on using the blues, in particular blues stanzas and 12-bar compositional structure, to create songs based on participants' experiences of homelessness, perseverance, coming of age, and the struggle of doing so in their environments. Residencies culminated in showcases where participants performed their songs for their peers, invited guests, and staff.

Overview of Methods

As part of a larger evaluation of 5HE's residency program, I worked the Loyola University Chicago Center for Urban Research and Learning (CURL) to observe all residency sessions and conduct pre- and post-residency focus groups with participants and TAs. Fifty hours of participant-observation were conducted during residency sessions. Pre- and post-residency focus groups were conducted with TAs to explore the development and implementation of the curriculum and their experiences of the residencies. Pre- and post-residency focus groups were conducted with residency participants to explore their experiences of the residencies. SPARC funding provided \$5 stipends for residency and focus group participation for residency participants. No stipends were provided for TAs. All procedures were approved by the Loyola University Chicago Institutional Review Board, Project #2240.

Data Analysis

Field notes and interview transcripts were analyzed using NVivo 11 and a modified version of Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw's (1995) model of coding and memoing. Data were reviewed as a complete set and openly coded, making initial memos. Themes were then chosen, followed by focused coding that was tied together by integrative memoing. A thematic narrative was developed from this iterative and recursive process and reviewed with TAs and participants to provide reliability and validity.

Findings

Ongoing analysis of the data suggests TAs developed the group-based music curriculum in collaboration with TLP staff. As the curriculum was implemented, TAs adapted the curriculum as needed in an effort to engage participants' talents, strengths, and interests. Observation and focus group data suggest TAs' adaptability, which is defined as flexibility, role adaptability, and meeting participants where they are, played an important role in providing participants with opportunities to gain a deeper understanding of music composition, production, and performance. In addition, participants demonstrated personal agency, empowerment, and collective decision-making throughout the residency. Based on these findings, it appears the increased structure and support offered through the group-based music education curriculum benefitted participants.

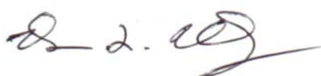
Dissemination

5HE and TLP continue to partner in 2018. I continue to work with CURL to develop a year 2 report of our ongoing evaluation of the 5HE residency program. In terms of dissemination, I am working with a graduate assistant on two manuscripts. One will present the overall findings from the larger evaluation of the 5HE residency program. The other will explore the role of TA facilitation and leadership in group-based music education. In terms of presentations, I have submitted an abstract for the upcoming 2018 IASWG symposium in South Africa. To date I have presented findings from this work at the following conferences:

- Kelly, B. L. (2018, January). *Investigating the role of structure and support in group-based music education for emerging adults experiencing homelessness*. Paper presented at the Society for Social Work Research Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C.
- Kelly, B. L. (2017, October). *Group-based music residencies: Ensuring healthy development for emerging adults experiencing homelessness*. Paper presented at Council on Social Work Education Annual Program Meeting, Dallas, TX.
- Kelly, B. L. (2017, June). *Group-based music residencies for young people experiencing homelessness: Opportunities for agency and empowerment*. Paper presented at the 39th International Symposium on Social Work with Groups, New York City, NY.
- Cohen, C. S., Muskat, B., Lisbon, M. V., Kelly, B. L., Carey, L., Simon, S., Kilbane, T., & Cole, J. A. (2017, June). *The 2017 SPARC forum on project application, acceptance, & implementation*. Workshop presented at the 38th International Symposium on Social Work with Groups, New York City, NY.

I would like to thank the IASWG SPARC committee for their support of this work and IASWG as an entity for supporting group research and program development. I am so grateful to have had this opportunity to provide stipends for residency participants in order to learn more about the potential of group-based music education. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



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Assistant Professor

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