

Coping With COVID: A Panel Discussion

UMTA Virtual Conference, November 2020

YOUMTA—Just Say Yes!

Moderator:

Barbara Gill, Davis Chapter & UMTA Communications Committee Chair

Panel Members:

Lu Duke, Clinical Mental Health Counselor

Annette Freston, Vernal/Roosevelt Chapter

Tiffany Horrocks, Salt Lake Chapter

Rachel Willis, Ogden Chapter

Opening quote

Children’s brains are resilient. However, according to Lori Desautels, there are three conditions that the brain cannot handle—chronic unpredictability, isolation and physical/emotional restraint—and the pandemic heightens all three (Grieze 2020). The more our teaching can address these conditions, the more likely learning will take place. ...It takes a calm brain to calm another brain, so it is imperative that teachers are also taking care of themselves. More important than ever is the need for kindness and flexibility.

Karen Thickstun, *American Music Teacher: Lessons Learned From COVID-19*, August/September, p.13.

Closing quote

The many virtual conferences, webinars and discussions happening now online on the topic of remote teaching are a demonstration of how we are now adjusting to the new normal. The work is challenging and demands enormous amounts of energy, but it is also exciting and inspiring. And so, to all of you currently making lemonade out of the current lemon surplus, I raise my glass. Cheers!

Courtney Crappell, *American Music Teacher: Lessons Learned From COVID-19*, August/September 2020, p.9.

Discussion based on “Ten Tips: Mental Well-Being” from *Piano Magazine: Teaching Piano in the Time of COVID-19*, Vol.12, No.2, p.80.

1. Be Present

- Mindfulness
- Eye contact
- Get in the mindset of teaching so you can be there for the student.
- Being present is a conscious practice. What you practice grows stronger.

2. Establish Boundaries

- What is okay and what is not okay. Boundaries protect us and protect other people from us.

3. Prioritize Your Attention

- Teach a person, not a lesson

4. Move your body

- The power of moving your body has physical, mental, and emotional benefits.

5. Notice changes

- We can uniquely notice changes in our students as we have lessons one-on-one, week after week, year after year.

6. Laugh!

- Ways teachers and students survived quarantine with a smile.
- Flock of Flamingos (yard art)
- The Merry Moustache Month of May (see Utah Music Teachers Association Public Facebook page, June 20, 2020)
- Piano Practice Bingo by Southern Fried Soprano (teacherspayteachers.com)
- Recital Prep Boot Camp (teachpianostoday.com)

7. Remain objective

- Give up expectations to stay objective

8. Practice self-compassion

- Believe and trust in yourself as you would a good friend.

9. Connect with others

- UMTA is a perfect way to connect as music teachers.

10. Ask for help when you need it.

- We need a tribe.
- Free resources for reaching out include:
 - [Coronavirus.utah.gov](https://www.coronavirus.utah.gov)
 - Utah Strong Recovery Project
 - [Intermountain Healthcare.org](https://www.intermountainhealthcare.org)



Additional Resources from Lu Duke, CMHC

Brené Brown, *The Gifts of Imperfection*.

A self-help book that is an easy read.

She proposes 10 different guideposts to help us become more “authentic” in our lives. Each guidepost identifies what we may want to cultivate, but also recognizes what we need to give up in order for it to happen. Guidepost #1 is "Cultivating Authenticity/ Letting Go of What People Think." A few other cultivating topics include: self-compassion, creativity, meaningful work and play & rest. Which means we need to be able to give up: perfectionism, comparison, exhaustion as a status symbol and productivity as self-worth.

Calm app. Free trial and then approximately \$70 for a year.



*Counseling in 19 languages available

