



SOUND HEALING

Drawing upon the vibrations and frequencies of select musical instruments to calm the mind and body.



Based on the idea that every existing thing teems with its own signature vibration, Sound Healing chooses instruments with especially pure and resonant tones -- gongs, crystal bowls, chimes, tuning forks, and the harp -- to bring the frequencies radiating from a person into harmony. Beyond the specialty instruments, what distinguishes a Sound Healing session is something as invisible as music but just as affecting: the belief that everything making noise in the room, instruments and participants alike, has something crucial to contribute. The expert practitioner respects that the sounds are as alive as the people, each with its own peculiar texture and way of moving through the air. Indeed, one of the gifts of Sound Healing is that against the backdrop of such an otherworldly orchestra, no response to the music can possibly seem strange. Unlike a concert hall where only applause might be accepted, any sound the audience makes here -- humming, whistling, or staying silent -- simply multiplies the diversity of the soundscape. In the context of a day where there might be vigilant measuring and monitoring, Sound Healing offers a moment of contrast. Lying down in the middle of a room with nothing else asked of them, people have the space to hear and be healed.

TCFD OUTCOMES

This activity is aimed at helping individuals excel in the following categories:

- ♥ Emotional Regulation
- ⚡ Energy Regulation

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Participants in Sound Healing start each session by finding a comfortable position. Ideally, this involves lying down on a yoga mat, with blankets and/or pillows, but participants can also participate from a seated position. Regardless of the props, the ultimate goal is to make the environment conducive to peace and relaxation. The facilitator might begin by reminding people to breathe deeply as they follow the sound of the instruments. And yet, they might also assure people that they don't have to do anything in particular in order to feel affected by the session. Sound Healing is both an auditory and physical experience as the vibrations produced by the instruments move tangibly throughout the body, affecting multiple systems such as the heart rate, brain waves, and respiration. As the facilitator moves among the instruments, deciding which tones to set off together and in what order, she also instills stillness in the body with her own focused and grounded energy, complementing the work of the vibrations themselves.

Instruments Utilized:

Gongs: Produce a full spectrum of sound waves that "massage" the body from the inside out.

Crystal Bowls: Known for their pure and enveloping tone. They fill the space with a multidirectional sound, sharpening clarity and concentration.

Tuning Forks: Held on either side of the head or body. Designed to beam a single note into the body rather than a full array of notes.

Tibetan Bowls (metal): Resonate with their own timbre and set of overtones, unique to each bowl.

Koshi chimes and Ting Shaws: Often used to conclude a session. These instruments produce light, twinkling sounds that return one's focus back to the present and signals a transition back into the daily routine.

Harp: Tends to resonate with the human voice and can coax the mind to a more relaxed state.

Other instruments, such as an ocean drum, blue drum, or hand drum: May be used to create a richer, thicker sound context depending on the desired experience.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR TCFD MUSIC THERAPISTS:

- **The properties of sound have the ability to impact the body, mind and spirit.**
- **Reaching a different level of consciousness can restore balance and mitigate stress**

WHY WE DO IT

While we might think that our ears are the only way we hear sound, our entire body is always listening. What we call a "noise" is actually matter -- like air or water -- being scrunched and stretched in a certain pattern until it reaches our ears, where it pushes and tugs the bones inside them with the same rhythm. While sound may be invisible as it passes through air, we can see this wrinkling of matter for ourselves when someone clomps into the kitchen and makes the water in our glass quiver or when a foghorn blows across a lake. Since water composes about 60% of the human body, we're made of the stuff sound can move through, and Sound Healing sets off intricate ripples throughout us that soothe our nervous systems. This interaction is a version of "entrainment," the natural phenomenon of vibrations from one object altering the vibrations within another, always in an effort to synchronize the two together.

Research has focused on the way this phenomenon works on our brains in particular. Brains emit waves at different frequencies, which correspond with different states of consciousness. In a deep and dreamless sleep, our brain waves tend to pulse in the range of 0-4Hz, which we classify as "Theta" waves. During waking hours, we give off "Beta" waves between 14 and 30Hz, which we experience as alertness on the low end and agitation on the high end. In contrast, the instruments of Sound Healing slow down our brain waves to the "Alpha" category of 8-13Hz, associated with the tranquil, lucid state when we're right on the cusp of falling asleep, disrupting the stress response, reducing blood pressure, and mitigating anxiety.