



When a person comes into a classroom with irrepressible rhythm in his body -- he's jiggling, he's rocking -- the typical sympathetic response might be, "What a pity he can't sit still." But when seated in the STOMP circle, the same movements that might have been perceived as a reason for him to leave become a reason for him to stay. In STOMP, his bouncing shows that he is already fluent in rhythm, which is all he needs to experience communication: He can "speak up" by offering a rat-a-tat-tat to the group. He can feel "heard" when the circle repeats it back exactly right. And he can also inspire someone to reply with something entirely new, all with no verbal language required. While English has only 26 black squiggles to work with, drumming has an alphabet all its own. It consists of elements like force, tempo, and hand placement just to name a few. With all these variables, there is so much potential to "say" something original in STOMP, but there is just as much potential to feel unified with the rest of the percussionists. For anyone used to being alienated for moving to the beat of their own drum, all it takes to join this community is to keep the beat.

## TCFD OUTCOMES

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

-  Socialization
-  Communication
-  Self Expression

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Within the STOMP program, participants are led through a variety of interactive rhythmic experiences, including chants, dances, creative movement, body percussion, drumming and instrumental play. These sessions can range from structured to improvisational, but they always begin with STOMP facilitators establishing a basic beat. The facilitators then look for the natural rhythmic impulses of the group members -- a leg shaking, a knee wobbling, a finger tapping -- and incorporate these proposed rhythms in order to create a shared experience. Facilitators might also broaden their focus to encompass what participants are saying and how they're moving: a word that someone keeps repeating to himself might become the basis for new lyrics while another person's marching might inspire new choreography for the whole group to follow. Ultimately, STOMP does two seemingly opposite things at the same time: It emphasizes the distinctiveness of each person while reinforcing the cohesion of the whole group.

## WHY WE DO IT:

Humans are intrinsically rhythmic beings. We begin life surrounded by the sound of our mother's heartbeat, and we go on to become walking percussion sections ourselves, full of the syncopated pulses of our own breath, brain waves, and steps. STOMP takes advantage of the phenomenon of "entrainment," or the way that the vibrations from one object naturally alter the vibrations within another, always in an effort to synchronize the two together. The constant, underlying beat holds the participants together throughout the whole STOMP session -- it reassures them that they can go ahead and have their bursts of experimentation because, whenever they're ready, that beat will be there to steady them and bring them back into the group once again.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR TCFD MUSIC THERAPISTS:

- **Every person responds to and relates to rhythm**
- **With thoughtful, clinical implementation, there is room for every person, at every skill level, to be successful within music and movement experiences**