

Rhythm2Recovery Lesson Plan Examples



Examples of potential lesson plans drawn from the Rhythm2Recovery Workbook Volume 1. Designed to give practitioners a starting point for addressing some of the key themes covered in this manual within their group practice. Each session is designed around 50 minutes of session time. *Note these are guides only and can readily be adapted or extended. Many groups benefit from repeating exercises, expanding on their associated themes & discussions each time, and some groups will require a greater emphasis on rhythm play & the musical elements of the model – flexibility is essential. For starting sessions please see the section ‘Starting Your First Group’ in the beginning of your R2R workbook.*

Values & Boundaries

1. Start with introductory rhythm play – free play around a Bass pulse with volume changes or the exercise ‘Call & Response to a Rhythm’.
2. Introduce the theme with a brief focus on the importance of values & boundaries with respect to healthy relationships, personal safety and identity. *Use ‘Rumble If...’ questions to help facilitate this discussion.*
3. Run the ‘Speaker’s Chair’ exercise with a focus “Something you VALUE in your relationships with other people”. At the conclusion write these answers (values) on a white-board and discuss their importance and the challenges of living up to them.
4. Introduce or remind the group of the Bass analogy and how it can represent our core values as these are often at the heart of healthy relationships and a grounded sense of identity.
5. Teach a rhythm or do some improvisation using the ‘Layer in Your Rhythm’ exercise.
6. Run the exercise ‘Crossing the Line’ to discuss the importance of boundaries in life generally, & in our relationships. And their changing nature in relation to trust, and the connection they have to our values.
7. Run either the ‘Values Rhythm’ or ‘Finding five or seven’ exercise
8. Summarise the session and finish with free play, fading to silence to end the session.

Healthy Relationships

1. Start with free rhythm play or practicing a rhythm you may have been learning from a previous session – *always expand from a set rhythm piece to allowing & empowering participants to vary it without losing touch with their Bass.*
2. Introduce the theme with a brief focus on the importance of healthy relationship in relation to happiness and meaning in our lives – as social creatures we thrive on nurturing, supportive relationships. *Use ‘Rumble If...’ questions to help facilitate this discussion.*
3. Run the ‘Focus’ exercise with a preliminary discussion on some of the patterns (Rhythms) we can fall into that undermine healthy relationships. Then run the extension focusing on, and discussing some of the patterns (Rhythms) we recognise that support healthy relationships. Discuss at the end how hard it can be to stop falling into these destructive patterns, and the need to reinforce the positives.
4. Play the ‘Speaker’s Chair’ exercise with a focus on “One thing that supports a healthy relationship”. List these on a white-board and connect to the theme of ‘Values’.
5. Do the ‘Rhythmic Wave’ exercise and discuss how our emotions can impact our relationships – positively or negatively. What are some ways we can manage our feelings, like jealousy, shame or frustration, so they don’t negatively impact our relationships?
6. Introduce the analogy ‘Harmony Drum’ – linking musical harmony to social harmony. Play the ‘Harmony’ exercise and examine some of the things that either allow us to find harmony in our relationships or undermine them.
7. Finish by summarising the learning and allowing for the expression of feelings through free play, fading to nothing to finish the session.

Teamwork

1. Start with free play and merge into the 'Heartbeat Rhythms' – ask people to connect through the heartbeat (BB) but play accents of their choice in the space around it. Bring to a close by 'Layering Out' (one by one each person in the circle stops, until all have stopped).
2. Introduce the theme 'Teamwork' and discuss the different types of teams we might belong to or encounter in our lives. Examine the way the previous exercise (1) relates to effective teams where we pull together (through the Bass) but also are allowed to bring our own strengths to the teams output (Accents). What might these two elements represent in terms of a family team?, a sports team?, a workplace team? *E.G., the Bass might represent common values, shared responsibilities or a mutual purpose. While the accents might represent our different personalities, skill-sets, interests.*
3. Do some rumble-waves; firstly eyes open & then eyes closed. How did you contribute to the teamwork in this game? How did you find your place? What about 'Trust' and it's importance in teams? *Listening carefully, trusting each-other and cooperating together are important parts of teamwork.*
4. Play the 'Speaker's Chair' exercise with a focus on "one thing that helps teams work well together" or "one thing that undermines a team" (*In larger groups, half can address the first question and the other half the second*). List in two columns on the white-board and summarise.
5. Run the exercise 'Layer in Your Rhythm' and afterwards discuss the importance of diversity in teams and their output. Also, explore the importance of tolerance, patience and encouragement in effective teams. Repeat the exercise with a different person initiating the rhythm.
6. Summarise the session and finish with the teamwork and regulation exercise 'The Echo Wave' going from loud to soft.

Communication

1. Start with 'Call & Response' – facilitator leading, emphasising simplicity, and succinctness. Then have each person lead with a call of their own and the group responding, one at a time around the circle.
2. Introduce the theme of 'Communication' and discuss its importance in relationships drawing on the group members experience – *use the rumble if... technique to facilitate this discussion*. Extend this discussion by connecting it to exercise 1 – how important is clarity in good communication? (Draw examples from the group). How important is consistency & timing to effective communication (draw examples from the group).
3. If the group is bonding play the exercise 'Dialogue' – where people have a conversation with each other across the circle (*lead by example & have fun with it, adding lots of personal expression*). Discuss different elements of communication with the group drawn from this exercise.
4. Explore the issue of communication breakdown in modern online communication where we often miss the vital cues of body-language and intonation when communicating. *Use the 'Rumble If.. to draw out responses.*
5. Teach a rhythm or do some improvised rhythm play using the exercise 'Layer in Your Rhythm'. Extend these options by putting rhythm parts together into a rhythm song or sculpting a song from the improvisation using the exercise 'Uncover to Discover'.
6. Discuss the importance and challenges of listening in communication generally and follow by running the exercise 'Listening Deeply'. What gets in the way of good listening?
7. Summarise the learning from the session & finish with free play, fading to nothing to end the session.

Resilience & Problem Solving.

1. Start with free rhythm play or practicing a rhythm you may have been learning from a previous session – *always expand from a set rhythm piece to allowing participants to vary it without losing touch with their Bass.*
2. Introduce the theme of 'Resilience' and use the exercise 'Rumble If...' to draw out examples of the participants own experiences of resilience.
3. Play the exercise 'Bounce Back' using the white-board to list common challenges across the lifespan that set people back in life and the group members ideas for overcoming and moving on from them.
4. Play the game 'Musical Chairs' with a focus on shifting perspective. How can altering our position sometimes help us find a way forward in the face of adversity?
5. Introduce the concept of 'Acceptance' in relation to adverse situations in our lives. *Sometimes there is little we can do to stop some of the difficult experiences in our lives – the betrayals, the disappointments, the losses; but finding a way to acknowledge these can often allow us to move forward, rather than being dragged down by them.* Now run the exercise 'Drop It' and discuss afterwards how it felt to let things go.
6. Summarise the session and finish with the exercise 'Yes I Can' – looking at how our attitudes and beliefs impact our ability to respond to adversity. A positive attitude can help overcome the most challenging circumstances.

Strengths & Managing Adversity

1. Start the session by 'Layering in Your Rhythm' – improvised play where everyone's contribution (strengths) contributes to the richness of the group sound. Fade away to finish.
2. Introduce the theme of the session and connect it to the 1st exercise – we all have strengths, even if sometimes we don't recognise them in ourselves or others. Discuss how recognising our strengths and the strengths in others allows us to employ them to meet the challenges in our lives.
3. Play the exercise 'Find Your Strengths' – recognising one strength we each have and after the game ask people to think about ways they have used that strength to advantage.
4. Follow on by playing the extension 'Find Your Neighbours Strength'. At the conclusion of this exercise examine the importance of helping people see their own strengths who may otherwise be doubting themselves and how looking for the positives in others supports better relationships.
5. Run the 'Speaker's Chair' based exercise 'The Ego Trap' helping people recognise that working on developing 'lesser strengths' can increase their resistance to adversity and improve their lives. What is something you're working on improving in yourself?
6. Play the exercise 'Balance Me' where we look at the importance of getting support from others (other's strengths) in times of hardship. Discuss the importance of, and avenues for, seeking help in times of trouble.
7. Summarise the learning and finish with free play and fade to nothing to end the session.

Managing Our Emotions

1. Start the session with exercise 'An Emotional Journey' – ask people to play together, connecting through the pulse, but with a focus on adding feeling to their rhythm that represents how they have been since we last gathered together.
2. Introduce the theme for the week and connect it to exercise 1, and in particular, the importance of finding constructive ways to release our feelings rather than hold them inside where they may build and create tension & perhaps explode. Releasing our feelings through the drum is one way – what are some other healthy ways we can release feelings? Write these answers up on your white-board.

3. Play the exercise “Show some Emotion’ where everyone gets to express a feeling through the drum and name it. Discuss the benefits and challenges of naming your feelings – *If you can name it, you can tame it.*
4. Move onto the game – ‘The Rhythm Detective’ where one person plays a feeling and another opposite in the circle tries to guess what it is. Try this several times eyes open and then eyes closed – which was more accurate? Discuss the dangers of misreading feelings in others and the consequences.
5. Run the exercises ‘The Pressure Pot’ and ‘The Pressure Valve’ consecutively, listing on the white-board things that give rise to feelings of stress and ideas for relieving or reducing these feelings.
6. Introduce the concept of the ‘Mindful Pause’ in relation to managing feelings rather than reacting to them.
7. Finish by summarising the learning from the session and then doing the exercise ‘Pause Before You React’ – each time you count in the pause emphasising self-responsibility in determining when each individual is emotionally ready to re-enter the rhythm – *only you know when you are stable enough to resume communication without falling back into emotional reactivity.* Focus on soft drumming after each pause and bring to a stop one last time.

Self-Belief & Enacting a Brighter Future

1. Start with free play and merge into the ‘Heartbeat Rhythms’ – ask people to connect through the heartbeat (BB) but play accents of their choice in the space around it. Bring to a close by “Layering Out’ (one by one each person in the circle stops, until all have stopped).
2. Introduce the theme and discuss the concept of ‘Life as Growth’ and that nothing stays the same – there is always opportunity for new opportunity, new growth and a brighter future. Just as in improvised music new rhythms and soundscapes appear each time we play.
3. Introduce the ‘4 Bass Break’ affirmation exercise, firstly working with the group to identify four things that help people break free of old patterns and find new opportunities. Examples might include – positive friendships, self-confidence, persistence, awareness etc. then teaching the break, and introducing it into the rhythm to affirm these ideas for supporting change.
4. Put group members into small groups of 2 or 3 and run the exercise ‘Find Your Voice’ on the theme of ‘Change’. They will write 2 or 3 short verses to rap between the heartbeat rhythm (BB) talking about the challenges they face and the change needed. Showcase an example:

B B I’m feeling stuck	B B I’m caught in a rut
B B Can’t see a way forward	B B Sheer out a luck
B B I know I’ve got to persist	B B I know I’ve got to resist
B B Just one step forward	B B And things can shift

Finish by identifying an upbeat verse that will serve as a chorus and have each group rap their verses with everyone wrapping the chorus in-between each verse.

5. Run the ‘I’ve Got The Power’ exercise with a focus on self-responsibility for enacting change.
6. Finish by summarising the lesson and running the exercise ‘A New Adventure’ – allowing people to practice breaking free of safe rhythms and supporting and affirming each other in the new patterns (rhythms) they realise.

Additional themes can be added to the ideas above to extend a program for several more sessions. Alternatively programs can finish with an opportunity to showcase the groups musical learning through a short public rhythm performance, if the participants are feeling comfortable.