

The Lived Experience of the Adolescent Listening to Preferred Music

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Dedications

This work is dedicated to my wife Maren and my mom.

In Memory of Richard T. Mahoney and Suzi Wollenberg

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To My Committee Members:

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Abstract

The Lived Experience of the Adolescent Listening to Preferred Music

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The purpose of this phenomenological research study was to gain knowledge about the lived experience of normal adolescents listening to their favorite music. This was an initial inquiry into the music listening experiences of four normal teenagers from the Philadelphia, PA area, with the purpose of providing information for clinicians about how a teen client's favorite music can be incorporated into clinical treatment and what sort of information this can yield about the music listener. Through open-ended interviews, co-researchers disclosed thoughts, feelings, body responses and other responses, revealing that each participant has a music listening experience particular to him or herself. There were similarities among the participants as well, though these should not be considered trends across the general adolescent population. While listening to favorite music, all participants enjoyed fond memories of friends and family while considering their values and feeling an improvement in mood. All participants projected their own feelings onto the music, and used descriptions for the music that reflected this. Notably, all the participants in this study used the lyrics in different ways from each other. Recommendations were made for future research to which knowledge from this study could be applied to developing a system for classifying music listening types. This system could be used by music therapists to improve the quality of treatment provided to teen clients.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an initial inquiry into the lived experience of adolescents listening to preferred music. The purpose is to find out what it is like for a teenager to listen to his or her favorite music in a context considered normal by the subject. Four adolescents listened to their favorite music (songs chosen by the teenagers themselves as “favorites”) with the researcher present, but as unobtrusive as possible. During and after the music listening experience, the subjects described their thoughts and feelings. They were asked to express whatever was going through their minds and were prompted with open-ended questions from the researcher. They were recorded with an audio device.

The literature presents the following problem: While it is known to be difficult for a therapist to form a therapeutic alliance with an adolescent client, there is little research on what kind of behaviors facilitate the formation of the strong alliance in this situation (Karver et al., 2008; Martin, Romas, Medford, Leffert, & Hatcher, 2006). A study by Silverman (2009) shows that a music therapist often chooses material for a session based on personal preference. The therapist may be confused, then, when the clients are not engaged with the activity (a phenomenon the author has witnessed firsthand). By understanding how adolescents experience music differently from adults, the therapist can design experiences more appropriate in generating the strong responses that have a positive influence on building the desired strong therapeutic alliance.

Many studies (Arnett, 1995; Campbell, Connell & Beegle, 2007; Larson, 1995; Nuttall, 2008a, 2008b) have discovered a variety of ways adolescents use their favorite music. Identity formation, emotional regulation, projecting a certain self-image, high

sensation, entertainment and youth culture identification were all identified, to say nothing of the “depth and breadth of meaning and personal meaning of the music” (Nuttall, 2008b, p. 109). While Arnett (1995) emphasized how the different uses all contribute to the adolescent socialization process (p. 525), Larson (1995) discussed the private use of music by adolescents, highlighting the large amounts of time adolescents choose to spend alone in their bedrooms. Participants quoted in the latter essay provided colorful thoughts and emotions that were happening concurrently with the music they were listening to when prompted to report their status. This current study focuses solely on the music listening experience and explores these kinds of responses in depth, looking for themes and connections between different listening experiences and different participants.

Neurological literature that focuses on the emotional effects of music is still in preliminary stages (Zatorre, 2005, p. 314). One such study provided adolescent subjects with a wide variety of musical stimuli, in order to evoke positive and negative reactions (Altenmüller, Schürmann, Lim, & Parlitz, 2002), but the field has not yet conducted a study with adolescents listening to preferred music in an everyday situation. This study supplements the current and future findings on the effects that preferred music has on the adolescent brain.

As recently as 2008, it has been stated in the literature that, “there is little research on specific therapist behaviors that contribute to treatment engagement with children or adolescents” (Karver et al., 2008, p. 17). DeCarlo and Hockman (2003) described the need for therapists to use intervention strategies based on “the daily life context of these youth” (p. 47), and conducted a study on introducing elements of rap music into group

therapy sessions with African-American males, a method found to be successful. Martin et al. (2006) found that respect, a large amount of time with a client and openness are the top three qualities looked for by an adolescent in his therapist (p. 134). This current study contributes to filling the well-defined gap addressed in all three studies with a focus on providing information for the music therapist trying to form a powerful therapeutic alliance with an adolescent client.

This thesis asks the question: What is the lived experience of adolescents listening to their preferred music? The objective is to gather and analyze the entire response as conveyed verbally and physically by four normal adolescents during and after the experience of listening to their favorite songs.

Delimitations of this initial study include the small number of subjects – only four – though the nature of the phenomenological study dictates that the data will not be generalizable to the greater population. Participants are ages 13 to 17, which is another delimitation. The limitations of this study determined in advance included the possibility that the researcher and an audio recording device might intrude on the natural experience of the subject and influence the data in some way. Participants may have felt as though they were presenting a significant part of themselves while sharing their favorite music, based on the repeated references in the literature to the music of teenagers playing a strong role in the identity formation process (Arnett, 1995; Campbell et al., 2007; Larson, 1995; Nuttall, 2008a, 2008b). This may have had an inhibiting effect on each subject's report. The capacity of the subjects to describe their experiences may have been limited and at times it was difficult to keep the questions open-ended with some subjects still developing abstract reasoning skills. Subjects who normally listen to music using iPods

with earplugs had to use speakers instead for logistical reasons. Finally, subjects were limited to certain geographic areas.

Based on Larson (1995), the participants were expected to provide colorful thoughts, emotions and expressions when listening to and talking about their favorite music. The findings in the study apply to music therapy settings where they may help the therapist improve his/her understanding of his adolescent clients' response to favorite music.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Use and Meaning of Music among Teens

As young children progress into adolescence, they typically begin to change the way they spend their time. A variety of sources show that adolescents spend more time listening to music than when they were younger (Larson, Kubey & Colletti, 1989; Lull, 1987; Roe, 1987). While these sources are more than twenty years old, the principle remains that the challenges of adolescence create new needs for a person in this stage. In an essay about the uses of popular music by adolescents, communication researcher James Lull writes, “Not only are their bodies changing, but they are casting about looking for excitement and avenues for creative expression and growth that are not available to them within the confines of home and school” (pp. 153-154). This process, not bound by contemporary trends, results in increased listening for teens, knowledge that is considered a given in recent literature that says a successful record company marketing campaign depends on understanding the adolescent market (Nuttall, 2008a, 2008b). Also, music has been shown to be the most treasured possession among the adolescent population (Kamptner, 1995).

What is happening when the adolescent listens to music? In a qualitative study of twenty teenagers interviewed by their friends, Peter Nuttall (2008b), doctor of consumer behavior at the University of the West of England, reveals that music listening is more than just a fashionable way for teens to pass the time. “To say music is cool and is simply used to help teenagers ‘fit in’ does not account for depth and breadth of the meaning and personal meaning of music to [adolescents]” (p. 109). According to Lull

(1987), “Popular music fits nicely into the daily life of adolescents since its lyrical content and the atmosphere that can be created by its sound reflect many of their concerns” (p. 152). In her master’s thesis, Patterson (2001), combined previous literature with the content of her own interviews of adolescents to develop the following themes of adolescent development, each directly related to the act of listening to favorite music. The themes are development of identity, autonomy from parental figures, identification with peers, evocation of memories or personal history, coping with stress, identification with ideals, expression of affect otherwise difficult to express, and recreation of intense affective states (pp. 38-39). These themes have been adjusted to meet the new findings from the literature. Each of these modified themes is explored in this literature review.

In a qualitative study of 12 teen music listeners, Nuttall (2008a) found that, “For all the adolescents in the sample, music played some sort of role as either a mode of expression [of identity] and/or fulfillment of emotional need both privately and in public” (p. 627). This literature review uses identity and emotion as the two main themes under which the following modified categories fall. The topic of identity includes the sub-topics of Development of identity, Autonomy from parental figures, Identification with peers, Evocation of memories or personal history and consideration of the future, and Identification with ideals. The topic of Emotion includes the sub-topics of Coping with stress, Expression of affect otherwise difficult to express, and Recreation of intense affective states.

Identity

Development of identity. Erik Erikson (1963a) defined Identity vs. Role

Confusion as the fifth developmental task of man, and the task associated the most with puberty and adolescence. He summarized his definition of identity as such: "An optimal sense of identity...is experienced merely as a sense of the psychosocial well-being. Its most obvious concomitants are a feeling of being at home in one's body, a sense of 'knowing where one is going,' and an inner assuredness of anticipated recognition from those who count" (Erikson, 1968, p. 165). The development of an identity comes at a cost, however. A teen, playing the role of a group member, might behave cruelly toward others who exhibit even small, perceived differences from his group, in terms of appearance or style. This is a way for the teen to establish one's own belonging to a certain, defined group of people, behavior described by Erikson (1963a) as a "defense against a sense of identity confusion." (p. 262).

In the case of identity confusion, or role confusion (Erikson appears to use these terms interchangeably), the adolescent has thus far been unable to find an appropriate identity for oneself, which can lead to "delinquent and outright psychotic episodes" (Erikson, 1963a, p. 262). The teen might overcompensate for his or her own shortcomings by demonstrating signifiers of a seemingly admirable peer, thereby giving up his own identity in the process (Erikson, 1963a). Role confusion can manifest itself in problems relating to intimacy with others, lack of motivation in occupational tasks, and a rejection of the roles suggested by society as appropriate (Erikson, 1968). A healthily developing person, however, will be able to avoid these pitfalls and, over the course of this developmental stage, gain "the accrued confidence that the inner sameness and continuity prepared in the past are matched by the sameness and continuity of one's meaning for others" (Erikson, 1963a, p. 261).

By their own reports, adolescents use their music as a way to “form, consolidate or defend an identity” (Nuttall, 2008a, p. 626). Music can be used as an expression of identity, sometimes an expression of individuality for teens (Nuttall, 2008b, p. 109). “Some of the songs I listen to will probably reflect me,” said one adolescent participant (Nuttall, 2008a, p. 626). Another was quoted saying, “I listen to more heavy music than probably all my friends because I feel quite deeply about music” (Nuttall, 2008b, p. 109). Teens demonstrating a greater commitment to certain musical performers or styles are shown to feel better able and more willing to express their identities (Nuttall, 2008a, p. 626).

In an essay based upon his own previous research, doctor of Human Development Reed Larson (1995) raises the possibility that adolescence is a time when a person experiences, “multiple or fragmented conceptions of who he or she is” (p. 538). To this end, Larson interprets teen music listening as a way for the teen to try on different personalities and explore various ideas of who he or she is. Larson writes, “Solitary music listening, I have argued, is a fantasy ground for exploring possible selves...The images and emotions of popular music allow one to feel a range of internal states and try on alternate identities, both desired and feared” (p. 548). Nuttall (2008a) shows that teens can also bring the experimentation of different selves into public, where they are able to “display different aspects of ‘self’ in a variety of situational contexts” in order to belong better (p. 628). When this is the case, the music shared within the group can be seen as more important and meaningful than at other times (Nuttall, 2008a, p. 628). Some serious music fans begin building identities as career musicians as well (Arnett, 1995, p. 523).

Music has also guided adolescents in finding their gender identities. In an essay on how adolescents use media for socialization, Jeffrey Jensen Arnett (1995), who holds a Ph.D. from the University of Virginia, points out that music plays a part in defining for young people what it means to be a man or a woman, including information that will shape the ideas of teens regarding their expectations in romantic or sexual relationships (p. 522). Brown and Hendeel (1989) warn that the messages from some music could be harmful in influencing the gender identities of teens, by providing information about sex and gender roles of men and women deemed out of step with respectable adult society. Larson (1995) seems to concur that adolescent media is incompatible with adult values, writing, “we have attributed teenagers' high rates of music listening to the fact that teen music, unlike TV, is produced by and for young people, thus it reflects adolescent concerns with autonomy, identity, love, and sexuality” (p. 542). In other words, it makes sense that this music would conform poorly to adult standards; It was produced without regard for its popularity with adults, as a way to meet the demands of teens only. Larson provides a summary:

The strong passions awakened by a song provide a personal refrain around which a provisional identity might cohere, if lasting only until noon hour. A retreat to one's bedroom and headphones after school returns one to a forum of emotional images for reassembling a sense of personal stability after surviving the slings and arrows of the day. The predictable selves that come alive in music are a vehicle for navigating the unpredictable and sometimes uncontrollable cascade of adolescent daily life. (p. 548)

Autonomy from parental figures. Blos (1979) highlights adolescence as a major step in human development. “I propose to view adolescence in its totality as the second individuation process,” he writes, “the first one having been completed toward the end of the third year of life with the attainment of self- and object constancy” (p. 142).

He goes on to discuss the importance of the perceived “Generation Gap” existing between teens and their parents, and its crucial importance in adolescent development. Blos writes, “the formation of a conflict between generations and its subsequent resolution is the normative task of adolescence. Its importance for cultural continuity is evident. Without this conflict, no adolescent psychic restructuring would occur” (p. 11). This restructuring is not an addition to or deletion of the id, ego, or superego themselves, but rather a shift in their relations to each other. The superego, formerly assuming absolute rule over the ego, becomes less powerful as the ego becomes increasingly critical and autonomous (Blos, 1979, p. 14). Erikson (1963b) describes a shift of ideals away from those of the parents, and toward ideals suiting a different set of standards (p. 13). This point will be detailed more fully in the section of this literature review about identification with ideals.

In interviews conducted by their friends, teens described episodes during which they were “forced” to listen to their parents’ choice in music, an expression of taste seen by Nuttall (2008b) as “a way of dissociating with parents” (p. 107). Willis and colleagues (1990, as cited in Larson, 1995), wrote that music can be used to “create and mark off cultural and personal space” (p. 543). Larson warns against taking this point overly seriously, however, explaining that in most cases, the rebellious music of teens is not shown to be a literal plan of action, but merely part of a fantasy of greater distance from one’s parents. Larson writes, “Even turning the amplifier up loud, in most instances, does not say to parents ‘Go to hell’; it says ‘I exist. I have my own tastes that are different than yours’” (p. 542). Larson cites a study by Smetana (1988), which offers that while teens are seeking greater freedom than was afforded them in childhood, what they really

seek is a renegotiation of their role in the family. A study by Grotevant and Cooper (1985) shows that different family dynamics correlate to differences in how this renegotiation takes place. And Nuttall (2008a) notes that while teens from intact (two married parents) families typically use music to diverge from parents, teens in single-parent or blended families sometimes report using music as a way to converge with a parent (most often with the single mother) and sometimes with new family members living in the home (p. 627).

Identification with peers. Distinct from the concept of developing an identity, identification is defined by Moore and Fine (1990) as an advanced form of internalization, where, “various attitudes, functions and values of the other are integrated into a cohesive, effective identity and become fully functional parts of the self compatible with other parts” (p. 103), though the differentiation between self and other remain more intact than in other forms of internalization. Erikson (1963a) said about teens suffering in a state of role confusion, “to keep themselves together, they temporarily overidentify, to the point of apparent complete loss of identity, with the heroes of cliques and crowds” (p. 262). But this increased alignment with peers, instead of with parents, happens far more often than just these times of particular desperation. A typically developing child identifies with other people by living together as a family, and creates expectations for oneself based on the roles played by these family members (Erikson, 1968, p. 159). “The adolescent process, however, is conclusively complete only when the individual has subordinated his childhood identifications to a new kind of identification, achieved in absorbing sociability and in competitive apprenticeship with and among his age mates” (Erikson, 1968, p. 155). The normally functioning adolescent decreases investment in

with parents and other adults, and increases the investment in the relations with peers, often in social groups. In the words of Blos (1979), these teens demonstrate “special forms of group behavior and social styles” (p. 12).

A study by Miranda and Claes (2009) found significant evidence that music listening could lead to relationships among adolescents based on similar taste in music (p. 225). A study by Nuttall (2008a) concurs, stating, “Music choice, use, and consumption of music comprise musical rules for a friendship group” (p. 627). Nuttall (2008a) found that teens are aware of others’ choosing friends based on musical taste, and they may not let all their musical opinions be known to the public as a result (p. 627). Teens may also change the music they listen to, based on their perceived expectations for group membership. Nuttall (2008a) writes that, “being ‘cool’ or hip in the context of sub-cultural groups (in this instance friendship group) is a prime motivator for the adoption and consumption of the music ‘belonging’ to that group” (p. 628), and raises the point that music preference could also be a result of, not a cause for, participation in a group of friends. Sometimes music listened to with peers is not actually the preferred music of the teen. Nuttall (2008b) found that, “some adolescents would listen to music with their friends in public but would listen to different music at home on their own or with family members. As such, music was used and consumed inconsistently by the adolescents in this sample” (p. 107). This ‘inconsistency’ appears to reflect different uses of music by individual teens for in public and private settings.

Thompson and Larson (1995) found that for more introspective music, listening alone is found to correlate to a sadder mood, while listening to the same music with friends brings about much more positive emotions. In a separate article, Larson (1995)

concluded, “the presence of a close friend transformed the sad, lonely themes of love and love lost into an experience of connectedness and human solidarity. Sharing this personal experience created a feeling of validation for the private self” (pp. 545-546). This example shows how the context of a listening experience can change the effect that a piece of music has, and also provides an illustration of adolescents strengthening their peer connections through music listening.

Hogg and Banister (2000) found in their study of adolescent music consumption, “Opinions of peers was important; and attitudes to artists were often split down gender lines” (22). Indeed, several studies found divisions in the tastes and styles of sharing music among male and female teens. Nuttall (2008b) found that teenage girls use non-musical methods, especially clothing, to express their musical tastes (p. 108). Larson (1995) pointed out that girls were especially likely to have positive mood shifts when listening to music with friends that would make them feel sad when they were alone (p. 545). Males, on the other hand, were noted for requiring music by performers deemed genuine and credible (Nuttall, 2008a, p. 627).

The identification that teens have with peers reaches beyond one’s group of friends, or even hometown. Larson (1995) points out that “music provides the security of identification with other like-minded peers. The teenager who deeply identifies with Guns-N-Roses gains the solidarity of being soul mates with millions of other youth” (p. 548). To similar effect, Arnett (1995) said, “media consumption may give adolescents a sense of being connected to a larger peer network...In a highly mobile society, the media provide common ground for all adolescents” (p. 524). Music is therefore a facilitator of adolescent peer identification at every possible scale. From the strengthening of a

relationship based on a one-to-one experience listening to music, to the membership within a group of friends empowered by collective listening experiences, all the way to world-wide affiliation with millions of other fans, music plays a prominent role in a teen's identification with peers.

Memories or personal history and consideration of the future. Erikson (1963b) describes the adolescent as searching for meaning in one's own story, in order to attach the events of one's past to more universal or cultural phenomena, involving great numbers of people over a very long period of time. During adolescence, he writes, "the life history intersects with history: here individuals are confirmed in their identities, societies regenerated in their life style" (p. 20). Erikson discusses that in youth there is a "fervent quest for a sure meaning in individual life history and in collective history, and behind the questioning of the laws of relevancy which bind datum and principle, event and movement" (p. 20). The adolescent, then, is at once searching for, examining and defining the meaning of one's own circumstances, and placing them into a more universal context. Inhelder and Piaget (1958) show that when a teen attempts to fit oneself into a larger context, the future is in consideration as well. They write, "...when he begins to think about the society in which he is looking for a place, he has to think about his own future activity, and about how he himself might transform this society" (p. 343).

Nuttall (2008b) gives an example of a teen finding special resonance in music because of its close connection to her personal history. The interviewee says, "...there are certain songs which even though they can't relate to every person but to me they relate to like things that have happened to me or things that I think or do" (p. 109). Nuttall saw this as an example of the teen's using music as a way to express individuality (p. 109). A

teenaged girl in another study, listening to music in her bedroom, recorded her thoughts: "I'd like to find a perfect guy and live a simple happy life, dedicating ourselves to saving the world and everything in it. I want an empty apartment with a beautiful view--only necessary furniture and artistic decorations (my husband's?). I hope my life won't turn out too disappointing" (Larson, 1995, p. 535). Larson (1995) indicates this vacillation between positive and negative types of thoughts is normal, when he concludes from all responses that sometimes the self-examination during music listening:

...involves pumping oneself up with images of power and conquest; other times it may involve fantasies of merger and rescue by an idealized lover; yet other times, it may involve intense worry about personal shortcomings and their significance for one's future. (p. 547)

In any event, it is clear that teens listening to music, by their own accounts, are sometimes examining their own lives in the process, thinking about how they have fit into a larger story in the past, and how they will continue to do so in the future.

Identification with ideals. "It is an ideological mind," says Erikson (1963a) of the adolescent thought process (p. 263). Indeed, the adolescent mind aligns itself with big ideas, as discussed previously in this literature review in the section on personal history. Blos (1979) says the adolescent, "attaches himself to these broader social issues," to align himself with "a viable ideology and an emotional referent" (p. 15). Erikson sees this issue reflected not only in personal ideals, but also in interpersonal ideals among teens. "Youth loves and hates in people what they 'stand for' and chooses them for a significant encounter involving issues that often, indeed, are bigger than you and I" (Erikson, 1963b, p. 12). Erikson (1963b) highlights the adolescent tendency of gaining fidelity toward certain people and ideals, "counterpointing the newly won individual identity with some communal solidarity" (p. 20).

Despite working toward autonomy from parents and teachers during this stage, an adult may still fit an elite designation by the adolescent. Adults with a certain “artistic veracity,” for example, can “become representatives of an elite in the eyes of the young, quite independently of whether or not they are also viewed thus in the eyes of the family, the public, or the police” (Erikson, 1963b, p. 13). In other words, the teen may develop a set of criteria for admiring and supporting an adult (in the case of this thesis, the adult may be a famous musician), for different reasons than the adult community would see as appropriate. This adjustment of standards represents a shift toward autonomy for the teen.

Consistent with this requirement of artistic honesty, Nuttall (2008b) found that, “there appeared to be a need for artists to be ‘genuine’ or credible. This could, for example, be songwriters looking to their own experiences to write lyrics” (p. 109). The demand for credibility was made particularly by males and those attempting to maintain a status of holding “expert knowledge” (Nuttall, 2008a, p. 627). Participants in a study by Hogg and Banister (2000) similarly found authenticity to be an important factor in the teens’ acceptance of music, and that they would feel “disappointed” or “cheated” when their favorite acts would lip sync or perform poorly during television performances (p. 23). “I think if bands can’t sing live, they shouldn’t be singing at all” (p. 23), said a 15-year-old female participant in that study.

Arnett (1995) points out that the mass media, including popular music, play a role in helping teens identify the meaning in life, including, “what is important, what is to be valued, what is to be lived for” (p. 526). British teens interviewed by Frith (1981) revealed that their musical selections were “listened to, appreciated and criticized in

terms of their meaning – lyrics were important but not the only source of such meaning – and music was praised in terms of its originality, truthfulness and beauty” (p. 206).

Arnett explains that since the media are driven by the free market and it is in the best interest of media outlets to give adolescents what they want, adolescents on the whole have more control over the media than they do over their families, schools or the government (p. 526). Larson (1995) points out the advantage that music has over the other mass media when vying for the attention of young people, pointing out that, “music, unlike TV, is produced by and for young people, thus it reflects adolescent concerns with autonomy, identity, love, and sexuality” (p. 542).

Arnett (1995) writes that the large network of fans of a particular performer or style of music, is, “united by certain youth-specific values and interests” (p. 524). This relates to what Inhelder and Piaget (1958) said when they wrote that the adolescent “...tends to participate in the ideas, ideals, and ideologies of a wider group” (p. 341).

Emotion

Coping with stress. Erikson (1968) talks about the “inner fire of emotions and drives,” experienced by adolescents (p. 158). And Blos (1979) makes it clear that adolescents, by virtue of their developmental stage, are faced with a great deal of anxiety. He refers to the drive and ego regression that take place during adolescence, and says of the drive regression in particular, that it:

...induces anxiety more often than not. Should this anxiety become unmanageable, then, secondarily, defensive measures become mobilized. Regression in adolescence is not, in and by itself, a defense, but it constitutes an essential psychic process that, despite the anxiety it engenders, must take its course. (p. 154)

Therefore, managing one's anxiety is a task faced by adolescents, and failing to do so could result in the appearance of ego defenses, leading to further problems.

A study by Kurdek (1987) of junior high students at a public school (n = 298) revealed that for both boys and girls, music listening is a widely used form of coping with difficult emotions. Nuttall (2008a) writes, "The role of music is clearly useful in our overall understanding of coping strategies" (p. 628). Larson (1995) identifies adolescence as the time in one's life when the responsibility for emotional stability is transferred from the parent to the child, sometimes before the child is prepared for the challenge (p. 538). Larson finds that for the adolescent listener, the images within the music can "provide a temporary sense of stability that stands in for the lost preadolescent stability anchored in parents" (p. 546).

Schwartz and Fouts (2003) identify three ways in the literature that adolescents use music as a way to cope. First, "by seeking validation for what they think and feel about themselves, others, and society, it assures them that they are not emotionally alone" (p. 206). Miranda and Claes (2009) identify this as problem-focused coping. Schwartz and Fouts find that some music "can serve a cathartic or calming effect, an effect that relieves unhappiness, anger, or anxiety" (p. 206). Miranda and Claes classify this as emotion-focused coping. And finally, Schwartz and Fouts write that the music may "distract listeners with external stimulation, thus escaping or avoiding uncomfortable and unwanted moods and feelings" (p. 206). Miranda and Claes classify this variation as avoidance/disengagement coping. These three forms of music-based coping – problem-focused, emotion-focused, and avoidance/disengagement – will be discussed individually.

Problem-focused coping. In a study by Campbell et al. (2007) of 13-18 year old students (n=1,155), many students cited their use of music as a way to cope with deeply painful issues, such as loss and abuse (p. 228). Nuttall (2008a) finds that adolescents in blended or single parent families seem to use music to a greater extent than those in two parent households (p. 627). This finding could be related to the fact that these teens have lost a parent and have discovered music as a way to cope with that loss.

Music is seen by teens as a way of dealing with less traumatic situations as well. Nearly half the respondents of the Campbell et al. (2007) study reported that music was an important way for them to deal with everyday social pressures created by school, family and friends. “The lyrics of songs, in particular, were seen as carrying messages that act as reassurance that the teens are not alone in the world and that other people have gone through the stages and struggles they experience” (Campbell et al., 2007, p. 228). Miranda and Claes (2009) found that the use of this coping style correlates to lower levels of depression among girls, but not boys.

Emotion-focused coping. In contrast to the use of music to think about and address one’s problems, emotion-focused coping is used by adolescent music listeners, in the words of one source, as a “tranquilizer” (Wells and Hakanen, 1991, p. 453). About a third of respondents in the Wells and Hakanen (1991) study reported using music “a great deal” both to “calm down” and “mellow out,” and fewer than 20% of respondents reported not using music at all for these purposes (p. 453). Nuttall (2008a) found an increase in an adolescent’s focus on music during major family difficulties. This is consistent with a study by Chong-Bum et al (1993), who found that “changes in family structure, or changes in household location may stimulate feelings of insecurity which

can be assuaged by the ‘possession’ of something” (p. 196). Rindfleisch et al (1997) found evidence that “young adults from disrupted backgrounds may use material objects as surrogates for absent parents” (p. 320). Nuttall suggests that since music is easily possessed by teens, it is more accessible as a coping mechanism than other, less attainable items (p. 628).

In addition to the music’s providing specific references to life problems through the lyrics, as in problem-focused coping, music can also provide relief from these issues of school, family and friends. “Music’s power to control negative emotions, in particular anger, also emerged from the essay sample” (Campbell et al., 2007, p. 228). Arnett (1992) raised the possibility that “adolescents who have unhappy relationships with their families use the music as a way of purging their frustration and anger over this and other problems” (p. 328). However, Miranda and Claes (2009) found this behavior to be “maladaptive,” saying, “In short, adolescent boys may be more prone than girls to engage in maladaptive emotion-oriented coping by music listening, probably through venting, which in turn would be associated with their depressive symptoms. (p. 227). Indeed, Miranda and Claes found that use of music in this way correlates to higher depressive symptoms in boys, not in girls.

Avoidance/disengagement coping. Separate from the use of emotion-focused coping to calm emotions, is avoidance/disengagement coping, used by teens to ignore the difficult emotions. Nuttall (2008b) cited reports in his interviews of teens using music, “to escape: ‘I can turn the music up loud and it blocks out everything else’” (p. 107), said one interviewee. This type of coping was found by Miranda and Claes (2009) to correlate to higher levels of depression in girls only.

Gender differences. Teenage girls are regarded as using music as a coping mechanism more than their male counterparts. Miranda and Claes (2009) report that girls engage in all three styles of coping, emotion-focused, problem-focused, and avoidance/disengagement, more often than boys do (p. 227). Wells and Hakanen (1991) found that girls used music more to calm their emotions (p.453), and the Campbell et al. (2007) findings were consistent, showing that the percentage of teen girls reporting this use of music as a way of coping was nearly double that of the teen boys (p. 229).

Expression of affect otherwise difficult to express. Part of the generation gap described by Blos (1979) exists on account of communication barriers between adolescents and adults. “Whenever we [adults] are able to decipher the message that lies embedded in his [the adolescent’s] action, we can entertain the reasonable hope that he will comprehend what we are saying to him” (p. 22). Blos says this deciphering is necessary because, “...the symbolic system of language and thought has become partially lost to the adolescent as an expressive instrumentality for thought and feeling; consequently, he employs a particular modality of coded communication through action” (p. 219). Similarly, Inhelder and Piaget (1958) refer to the “experimental thinking that impels youth toward thought and action at the same time” (p. 335). In other words, the adolescent mind is often at a loss for words when trying to communicate emotions, and sometimes translates thoughts directly to misguided action instead.

Nuttall (2008a) emphasizes the idea of adolescents using music to “express” themselves. A 16 year-old participant in the Nuttall (2008a) study describes the power of music, perhaps inadvertently demonstrating his own difficulty in finding the language to describe the feelings: “...you can’t freeze frame it...you can’t look at it and say this is

what is happening...it's fleeting cos it's always moving, it's always changing. If you stop it or pause it it dies. It's better than everything else and uncontrollable because no-one can say what music you can't play" (pp. 626-627). In the words of an adult researcher, "Popular music is crafted to generate powerful images and emotions that adolescents can use to make sense of and cope with their stressful lives" (Larson, 1995, p. 548).

Recreation of intense affective states. Blos (1979) writes about the intense emotions experienced by adolescents:

Revolutionary psychic changes seldom proceed in the secret depth of the soul without giving rise to excesses in action and thought, to turbulent manifestations, to ideational iconoclasm, to special forms of group behavior and social styles. All of these phenomena have been seen as typical of the transition from childhood to adulthood. (p. 12)

Further, Erikson (1968) mentions that, "many 'recovered' delinquents probably feel quite estranged about the 'foolishness' that has passed" (p. 158), in regard to the strong feelings and misguided actions of their youth. Both of these passages seem to demonstrate that from the adult perspective, the life of an adolescent seems unpleasant and difficult. After all, it is distinguished by dramatic emotional drives leading to chaotic and regrettable behavior.

However, adolescents can find these powerful emotions attractive, and at times they aim to enhance them with music (Nuttall, 2008a, p. 626). Arnett (1992) found that especially reckless behavior was not caused by the music listened to by teens, but rather that reckless behavior and listening to highly stimulating music (heavy metal and hard rock music listening were investigated in the study) are both features of a person with very high levels of sensation seeking (p. 325). "Getting pumped up" was the only way of an adolescent's using music to manage mood more often employed by males than

females (Wells and Hakanen, 1991, p. 453), and indeed, Arnett found that most of the teens reporting a preference for the loudest and most stimulating music in his study were males (p. 319). Girls enhance difficult emotions through their music as well. “Among the girls in our sample, a frequent scenario was sitting alone in one's room listening to soft rock, sometimes thinking about boys. The moods reported during these times were often quite dysphoric – they felt sad and lonely. Yet clearly this was an activity they had chosen” (Larson, 1995, p. 545). Notably, a study by Wass et al. (1988) showed that fans of music with homicidal, suicidal or satanic themes were more likely than fans of other music styles to claim they knew "all" the words to their favorite songs (p. 183). This is one of few references in the literature to the distinction over whether teens place more value on the lyrics or the other aspects of the music they listen to. Another source offers that there is no distinction to be made between the lyrics and the beat of popular music, and that these are not separate factors at all (Lull, 1987, p. 146). Still, this topic will be explored as it arises from the phenomenological interviews for this current study.

Larson (1995) wrote, “Intense affect, such as the feelings a teenager might get from a favorite song, may serve as an organizer of the self. One boy often listened to music to get himself energized before school. The emotion of the song became a personal mantra that echoed in his head all day and helped keep the provisional self that he had built around this song intact” (p. 546). Such examples illustrate that the boundary between an adolescent’s using music in working toward an identity, versus using the music to deal with emotions can appear blurry, if it exists at all.

Maturation of the Brain During Adolescence

Inhelder and Piaget (1958) explain that the adolescent thought process differs from that of the child, in that the teen is able to think beyond the present, form theories, commit to possibilities, and to consider one's own thoughts, while the child lacks these abilities (p. 339). Some changes typical to the adolescent mind, such as an increase in cognitive processes and the intensification of emotional reactions, correlate to physical changes happening in the brain throughout this time (Rice and Dolgin, 2005; Steinberg, 2005). In a review of literature, Steinberg finds,

...considerable evidence that the second decade of life is a period of great activity with respect to changes in brain structure and function, especially in regions and systems associated with response inhibition, the calibration of risk and reward, and emotion regulation. (p. 69)

It has been revealed, contrary to prior belief, that much of the human brain continues to make substantial developments throughout adolescence (Rice and Dolgin, 2005, p. 152). The frontal lobe, associated with planning and impulse control, is among the areas still developing during the teen years and is not fully matured until one's early twenties (Rice and Dolgin, 2005, p. 152). A study by Hooper, Luciana, Conklin, and Yarger (2004) shows improvements in a person's ability to calculate risk and reward through late adolescence and suggests further development into adulthood as well (p. 1155).

Steinberg (2005) points out that while cognitive advancements are made during adolescence, there is also an emotional element influencing the teenager's decision-making process (p. 73). Steinberg points to evidence that puberty brings about new drives, motivations and intensity of feelings, as well as new experiences that evoke strong feelings, which may influence the emotions playing a role in the adolescent thought process (p. 73). Concurrent with puberty is the rapid development of the amygdala (the

area of the brain in charge of primal and emotional responses), ending around the age of 16 (Rice and Dolgin, 2005, p. 153). At the end of this rapid development, many of the amygdala's synapses (mostly synapses that cause excitatory responses) begin being eliminated as the inhibitory frontal lobe continues to develop, a process that helps restore stability to one's decision-making abilities (Rice and Dolgin, 2005, p. 153). A study by Bechara, Damasio, Damasio, and Lee (1999) emphasizes the continued role of emotions in the adult decision-making process by demonstrating that the amygdala plays a significant role in one's ability to determine risk and reward (p. 5479).

Summary of Literature

It is revealed through the literature that the typical adolescent confronts major issues concerning identity and emotion, and often turns to music when facing matters surrounding either.

The typical adolescent works on formulating an identity, a process that includes developing one's sense of self as he/she finds autonomy from parents and spends more time alone or with peers. Music plays a role by providing structure for the teen, both in public and in private. In public, the music can provide cultural and behavioral expectations. In private, music can provide an internal framework for teens seeking a way to organize their thoughts and emotions in a way that makes sense to them. Though that context may be temporary, it provides a sense of stability for the moment, quelling the most immediate threats of role confusion.

Music plays a role as the teen finds autonomy from parents and moves toward solitude and/or increased social interactions with friends. Increased music listening

throughout adolescence is considered to be a part of the teen's separation from parents and spending more time alone or with friends. The music is not always a literal expression of the teen's actions but often a fantasy, drawing the listener toward idealistic thoughts that are typical to this developmental period. The teen begins looking outside his/her immediate family and thinking about his/her personal history and future plans as ways to fit into a much larger society (the worldwide group of all fans of a certain performer, for example), where he/she will represent ideals seen as important. Images in popular music can help illustrate these ideals for the teens; Teens preferring musical acts deemed 'authentic,' demonstrate a bent toward the fidelity that typically arises during adolescent years.

The teen dealing with the powerful emotions common to one's adolescent years is likely to use music as well. The human brain develops in such a way during adolescence that the teen can be more susceptible to extreme emotions that are difficult to cope with and to express. However, music can help to fill in these gaps. For better or worse, music is the most common way that teens cope with stress, whether by using it to cope with difficult situations, to change their emotions, or to disengage from these emotions altogether. Sometimes the changing of emotion comes in the form of mollification, but sometimes the teen, perhaps wanting to feel angrier or sadder, may use music to enhance an extreme emotional state. Sometimes music can take the place of words when an emotion is difficult to express.

Recorded music plays a role for many teens working through typical adolescent dilemmas involving the development of an identity and dealing with powerful emotions. Regardless of whether the reader feels that music's role is more positive or more negative

in these contexts, it would be difficult to deny the powerful role played by music in the development of the participants of the studies referred to in this literature review.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Design of the Study

This was a phenomenological study. The objective was to find out about the lived experience of adolescents listening to their favorite music.

Location of Study

Each interview took place in the adolescent co-researcher's preferred place of music listening, within the home.

Time Period for Study

March 5, 2010 – March 4, 2011

Enrollment Information

- Number of co-researchers included in the study:

4

- The age range of the co-researchers:

13-17

- The gender and racial/ethnic characteristics of the co-researchers:

Co-researchers represented a variety of gender and ethnic backgrounds. They all were residents of the Philadelphia, PA area and they were all English speaking.

Co-researcher Type

Co-researchers were normally functioning adolescents. This was an initial inquiry and co-researchers provided thorough insight that may be similar to, or reflected in, the musical experiences of other members of the adolescent population, with or without unusual psychiatric conditions.

Co-researcher Source

Co-researchers were recruited by way of flyers both posted publicly and given to family and friends who were acquainted with adolescent music listeners. The study followed a model of sampling to ensure that the co-researchers were well suited to fit the inclusion criteria below. This method allowed for purposeful sampling.

Recruitment

Following approval by the Drexel University institutional review board, co-researchers were recruited to the study by way of their parents using purposeful sampling.

Informational flyers (Appendix A) were posted at Drexel University and the surrounding communities. Parents of potential co-researchers contacted the principal investigator by telephone. Individuals were then screened for inclusion and exclusion criteria over the telephone. The individuals who met the criteria were asked to schedule an appointment. During that appointment the informed consent process, the research procedures and the possible risks were explained. Once parents and the co-researcher agreed for the co-researcher's participation in the study, informed consent was obtained and the music listening procedure and interview took place.

Co-researcher Inclusion Criteria

Included co-researchers were adolescents, between 13 and 17 years old. It was required that co-researchers listen to music regularly, so that this regular experience could be replicated for the study. For the sake of the research, co-researchers had to be able to express themselves clearly and be willing to share personal feelings, thoughts, and real-time experiences with the researcher. Co-researchers could belong to different

socio-economic groups and live in various locales (urban, suburban, rural).

Co-researcher Exclusion Criteria

Those excluded were adolescents considered low-functioning, or otherwise experiencing developmental delays. Co-researchers with previous diagnoses for mental or emotional disorders were excluded.

Investigational Methods and Procedures

Data collection. Data was collected by way of one interview each of the four (4) adolescent co-researchers. Questions dealt primarily in the experience of the co-researcher's listening to music, both during the interview and in past situations. Open-ended questions, (Appendix D) were used, with the intention of determining as much information as possible about the emotions, thoughts, physical reactions and other responses of an adolescent listening to preferred music. As this is a phenomenological study, the framework, definitions and meanings of the music as determined by the co-researchers were considered valuable data. This interview included portions where the co-researcher listened to preferred music with the researcher present. The co-researcher was prompted to describe the experience as it was happening and after each song to provide summative statements of the experience at the end of the interview.

Informed consent. The researcher gained consent from the parent or guardian of the co-researcher, providing two copies of each consent form (Appendix B). These materials made the parent aware of the minimal risk of the study, namely the risk of possible discomfort from conversing and listening to music with the researcher. The parent was asked after reading to restate the meaning of the forms to ensure complete understanding before signing both copies. After they were signed, the parent kept one

copy and returned the other to the investigator so that it would be stored in a locked, secure file in the Hahnemann Creative Arts in Therapy Program Offices.

To ensure an understanding of the study by the co-researchers, the researcher presented each with two copies of an assent form (Appendix C), briefly summarizing the interview process, and informing the co-researcher that he/she could stop the interview at any time and for any reason without penalty.

Each interview was audio-taped. Once transcribed, all tapes were held in a secure, locked cabinet in compliance with IRB guidelines, to be destroyed no less than seven (7) years after each co-researcher's 18th birthday. The co-researchers and their parents were made aware of all necessary details about the audio recordings and their childrens' ensured confidentiality via the aforementioned paperwork.

Data collection one: Gathering of background information (5 minutes). At the home of each co-researcher, in a common space (i.e., sitting in chairs at the kitchen table), the researcher asked the co-researcher to describe him/herself in his/her own words, with appropriate follow-up questions. This portion helped the researcher gain rapport with each co-researcher, and to find out a little about the conversational style of the co-researcher, allowing for a more authentic and natural discussion.

After signing the consent forms, the parents all remained in the immediate vicinity, with the exception of one mother who briefly took the dog for a walk before returning partway through the interview. In one case an older sibling was in the house, separate from the interview.

Data collection two: Music listening with concurrent and subsequent discussion (40-60 minutes). Researcher and co-researcher moved (when necessary) to

the place in the home where the co-researcher most often listens to music. The co-researcher chose a piece of music considered a “favorite” by him/her, identified it by performer and title, and made additional comments.

The co-researcher pressed ‘play’ and listened, with researcher sitting nearby, but in an unobtrusive place. The researcher made the co-researcher aware in advance that he might be asking questions about the co-researcher’s feelings, thoughts and responses to the music as it was playing. When each song or piece ended, there was further discussion, during which the co-researcher was encouraged to describe all aspects of the music listening experience.

This process was repeated either once or twice (at the discretion of the co-researcher), so that either two or three songs were listened to and discussed in this fashion. At the end of the final discussion, the adolescent co-researcher was encouraged to share any new insights about his/her music listening experience that had come into awareness since the beginning of the interview process.

Data analysis. The data (interview transcripts) from each of the five interviews were systematically analyzed and processed so that major and minor themes of each interview could be defined. A theme emerged when a certain phrase was emphasized or used repeatedly, or when an idea about the co-researcher’s interaction with the music was expressed repeatedly with words, inflections, physical movements, or a combination of the three. The definitions of terms and concepts only became clear when presented by the analysis of data.

Before each interview, and again before the data analysis began, the researcher took part in a process known as the *Epoche*. A Greek word meaning, “to abstain,” the

Epoche lets the researcher put aside any biases that may impact his interpretation of the co-researcher's actual experience (Moustakas, 1994, p. 85). The Epoche occurs to prevent the researcher from feeling like he knows what the data is going to be in advance of its collection, instead coming to the situation "with new and receptive eyes" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 89). To this end, the researcher made a detailed written list of assumptions about the adolescent music listening experience, and reviewed it before each interview in order to become aware of his own initial biases and personal experiences, and to leave that content out of the conversation unless it was first raised by the co-researcher. This list was appended after each of the first three interviews to ensure the researcher would not inadvertently bring one co-researcher's ideas into another's interview. Then before the data analysis, the researcher created another list, this time of the initial impressions and conclusions from each interview. These ideas were put to the side so the individual statements from the data could be considered on their own merit and reassembled for the textural description.

For the analysis of the phenomenological data, the researcher employed Moustakas' (1994) modification of the Van Kaam method (pp. 120-121). After each interview was transcribed verbatim, a new document was created and each meaningful instance of the co-researcher describing the experience was copied into the new document. This new document constituted the list of horizons of the experience (Moustakas, 1994, p. 120). Statements that were unnecessary or repetitive were removed, leaving only the Invariant Constituents of the experience (Moustakas, 1994, p. 121). These constituents were then organized into themes in a software program called Voodoo Pad Lite, a process that required some trial and error on the part of the

researcher, in order to organize the statements by theme and not in the way the interview questions were initially phrased. For example, the invariants listed under the banner of “Feelings” were re-organized when it was discovered that this theme was based upon the way the researcher asked his open ended questions, and not upon the way the co-researcher was presenting the information. Once this organization was complete for each interview, the researcher completed Textural Descriptions for all the interviews. The Textural Description is a detailed explanation of the themes as they are known within the co-researcher’s experience, using quotes from the original interview (Moustakas, 1994, p. 121).

For the next step, the researcher developed an Imaginative Variation for each interview. The Imaginative Variation is a presentation of the meanings and structures that underlie the data presented in the interviews, explained with a non-factual description (Moustakas, 1994, p. 99). In creating the Imaginative Variation, the researcher made a list of the possible core structures that emerged from the interview, many of which the co-researcher was unable to describe or explain. The researcher considered a variety of structural viewpoints from which to see the data, and synthesized the most resonant to capture the essence of the co-researcher’s experience, making only metaphorical references to the actual data during this step.

Finally, the researcher created a Structural Description for each participant. The Structural Description is an application of the meanings of the Imaginative Variation to the facts of the Textural Description, with the objective of seeing past the appearances and explaining the phenomena experienced by each co-researcher (Moustakas, 1994, p. 135). While the Textural Description details the experience, the Structural Description

explains why the co-researcher is having the experience. After these pieces of writing were completed, the researcher e-mailed all of them to their corresponding participants in case any of the teens felt it necessary to reply with comments.

Each of the four research participants provided dramatically different accounts of their music listening experiences, so it was not feasible to synthesize the experiences into one composite description, as so much data and detail would be lost. However, some of the similarities and differences of the listening experiences are outlined in the Results section of this study.

Possible Risks and Discomforts to Co-researchers

The only risk involved in the study was the possible discomfort a co-researcher might have felt while interacting with the researcher. This was considered minimal risk, as the act of conversing with new people is not outside the realm of experience for a normal adolescent who attends school with teachers and other students.

Special Precautions to Minimize Risks or Hazards

As detailed above, there was a short portion of the interview where co-researcher and co-researcher were in a neutral area of the house, talking about some general background information and becoming more comfortable in conversation.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This phenomenological study was completed to gain information about the lived experience of the adolescent listening to preferred music. The findings are presented in this chapter individually by co-researcher. While commonality among participants' music listening experiences may make certain findings appear more remarkable, the data of this phenomenological study cannot be generalized to the greater population of adolescents. The purpose is to explore the music listening experiences of these four teenagers as deeply and as completely as possible.

The participants were four adolescent volunteers, who were interviewed at home in their most common place of music listening. Each volunteer participated in a one-time interview lasting between 45 and 65 minutes, during which he/she listened to favorite selections of music and then explored the listening experience, in collaboration with the researcher. The participants will be identified by the numbers 101, 102, 103 and 104.

- Three participants were male and one was female.
- Two participants were 17 years old, one was 16 and one was 13.
- Three participants were Caucasian and one was African-American.
- Three participants identified as musicians who play for recreation, while one did not.

The four co-researchers in this study provided four dramatically different accounts of their music listening experiences. This researcher is of the opinion that it would be a mistake to distill all four unique experiences into a single generalized account. Fundamental structures would be left out of each experience, and the result

would fail to capture the richness of any one of the music listening experiences.

However, there were common qualities shared by some or all of the co-researchers, and these are explained below.

Each participant has thoughts of other valued people – family and friends – as a part of their memories of the past. 102 thinks of a funny friend who sang a song at a party whenever he hears the same song again. 101 and 103 both remember being introduced to a favorite song by an older sibling, and 104 by her mother. For all the participants, these memories were tied to positive feelings and coincided with improvements in mood.

Aside from friends and family, each participant expressed additional values when talking about their music listening. 101 finds it valuable to keep his emotions under control, something he is able to do with music. He also expresses distaste for a lyric in which he thinks a woman acts disrespectfully toward herself. 102 demonstrates his valuation of hard work and commitment to his own success when he interprets song lyrics as having a motivational message, even if he is not sure that it was the intention of the songwriter. 103 values his own individuality, which comes out when he dismisses the meanings of the lyrics of his favorite songs, not wanting to be influenced by a lyricist who may prove himself to be dishonest in the future. 104 values the emotional moments in her life from personal experiences and movies. She appreciates how her favorite music can enhance these moments and make them more powerful. Like 101, she also values music that helps her keep her emotions under control.

All the participants in the study experienced thoughts and feelings from a past event and/or era when they had heard the music before. Sometimes, this is a

memory of the first time the music was heard. 101 realized while doing the interview that when listening to favorite music, he commonly thinks of the first time he heard it. 104 hears a new favorite song for the first time and feels that it “clicks,” a feeling that recurs when she hears the song again. Interestingly, both 102 and 103 have thoughts while listening to some favorite songs, of the previous time in their lives when they used to skateboard all the time. 102 also connects songs with recent concurrent moods. If he was in a good mood while hearing a song recently, he might prefer it to a song that he last heard when he was in a bad mood, because the song brings back the same feeling again.

All the participants in the study characterized their favorite music by combining the actual elements of the music with the way it made them feel. “Much happier,” “calmer,” “bouncing off,” and “relaxing,” are four examples of these feelings-based descriptions of the music from 101, 102, 103 and 104, respectively. The participants used these phrases as part of casual conversation, blended with more objective descriptions of the music. It appears that each participant is affected in some way by his/her music, and experiences the effects as changes happening within the music, as well as within him or herself. Both 101 and 102 described feeling that the music was “picking up” or becoming “more upbeat” when the number of voices on the recording and the volume level increased, but the tempo remained the same. In both cases, this seems to have been an expression of feeling uplifted by the combination of musical elements.

All the participants in the study use their favorite music to regulate their mood. While two participants (101 and 104) consciously use music to calm themselves down, the other two (102 and 103) consciously use music to feel more energized and

motivated, especially in the morning.

Roe (1996) writes that technology has “stimulated the integration of the audio and the visual media to the extent that, in the music video clip, they have become indivisible” (para. 1). In fact, **all participants connect their music listening experiences to other media.** 102 and 103 both acknowledge that images from television or movies inform the thoughts they have while listening. When 102 listens to a song about going to college, he is using information from television and movies as a placeholder for the real experience so that he can better imagine what it will be like. 103 does the same by using concert footage he has seen on television to help himself imagine what it would be like onstage with the band, or as a member of the audience.

101 and 104 both have both been introduced to favorite songs for the first time by television or movies. Hearing one favorite song reminds 101 of the first time he heard the song as a part of a television program. And 104 regularly connects to favorite songs through movies she likes.

All the participants who are musicians themselves (101, 103, and 104) had thoughts of playing their instrument while listening to the music. Specifically, the topic of playing the guitar came up in each of those three interviews as those co-researchers all play the guitar. The drums and piano were also mentioned in this context. 101 and 103 spoke about selectively ignoring some sounds and listening to one instrument in the mix in order to learn how to play that instrument’s part.

The older participants all change their music to suit their specific needs and preferences. 102, 103 and 104 change their music by shortening it, adding new rhythms and changing it when replaying it on the guitar, respectively. In contrast, 101, a musician,

only spoke about reproducing his favorite music verbatim, as he heard it on the recording.

The following themes were shared by two of the four listeners:

- **Admiring the arrangement of different timbres playing at once, and appreciating the way these parts were arranged over time.** (103, 104)
- **Imagining a visual scene in a music video, in a movie, or from real life that would fit the song they were hearing** (103, 104)
- **The two oldest participants, each 17 years old, have thoughts about wondering what college will be like while listening to music.** (102, 104)

Finally, **each of the four participants responded very differently to the subject matter of the lyrics in their favorite music.** The summary is as follows:

- **101** often ignores or disregards the lyrics in his favorite music. In one case he forced the lyrics out of his experience because they were unpleasant for him to think about, and in another, he failed to mention them altogether. In both cases he focused on a certain instrument instead of the words.
- **102** engages directly with the lyrics of the songs, and often gravitates to his favorite songs because of the subject matter explored in the lyrics. As a result, many of his favorite songs have direct applications to his own life.
- **103** likes the words of his favorite music, but he refuses to consider the meanings behind those lyrics. 103 knows he will be disappointed if the performer defies the positive messages of his lyrics by behaving poorly in real life.
- **104** sometimes engages deeply in the lyrics of her favorite songs, admiring how well-written they are and identifying with the messages. During other listening

experiences, especially when she is listening to music to relax, she sometimes ignores the lyrics, choosing instead to hear the full sound of the recording.

The following section is a complete account of the listening experiences of the four co-researchers. In order to minimize reader bias and to ensure confidentiality for the co-researchers, the names of the musical performers and the titles of songs have largely been omitted from this study. The intended emphasis throughout is the co-researcher's firsthand experience with favorite music. Information about the music itself could be a distraction for the reader, who may view the experiences differently based on personal opinions of the music. The music chosen by the participants covered a wide variety of genres, themes and timbres, but in each case, the co-researcher classified the chosen pieces as their personal favorites.

Participant 101

101 is a 13 year old Caucasian male who plays several musical instruments and enjoys sports and video games. He listened and gave reactions to two favorite songs during his interview, which lasted approximately 45 minutes in total.

The following table displays the themes of 101's music listening experience, and examples of how the co-researcher described or alluded to these themes. This organization of thoughts is the basis for the Textural Description that follows.

Original Theme	Selected Instances of the Theme as Stated by the Co-Researcher
The first time hearing the song (including interpersonal connections)	"I guess whenever I listen to the song it reminds me of uh the summer I guess cause that's when I started listening to this particular album."

	<p>“Uh, it was after my uh oldest sister's first year of college so that was like the first time of her coming back after being away for a long time and she's the one who really got me into this kind of music.”</p> <p>“I think about the first time I heard it, again, and it's kind of weird that I should like it because the first time I heard it, it was awful, um, (laughs) it was terrible, I had a, uh, stomach flu...”</p> <p>“I had never really realized that every time I heard it, like I felt the way I felt when I was listening to it because that's the way I felt when I first heard it or when I was first talking about it with someone.”</p>
<p>Changes in mood</p>	<p>“Just like when I heard it and it was like, awful...Awful, and then you know, the song came on and I felt a lot better.”</p> <p>“So I was feeling kind of upset so I just like sat down and started listening to music and usually I just put it on shuffle, but I like started on something like that where it's slow and relaxing I guess.”</p> <p>“The whole song just picks up, which makes me feel better.”</p>
<p>Focus on elements of the music (including the standout instrument, rhythm, subject matter and non-concrete elements of the music)</p>	<p>“Just uh, guess its just the rhythm” [that makes him move his head]</p> <p>“Just a happy song I guess, just the tempo and the music.”</p> <p>“...what I really hear the most is like that piano part with all the glissandos and everything.”</p> <p>“I usually just like listen to the music. Sometimes I'll like, just isolate the lyrics and not really pay attention to them just because I like the music of the song so much... I hear it I just don't really like process it.”</p>

	<p>“And it just feels like a much happier song.”</p>
<p>The relation of the musical elements to 101’s being a musician</p>	<p>“Like sometimes if I’m listening to a song and I hear the piano part and I really like that, then the next time I listen to it, it’ll be like, I’ll listen for that more just cause, like, I’m trying to figure out like how difficult that would be to play.”</p> <p>“...when I’m playing it, like I’ll imagine myself playing it on the guitar. Sometimes I’ll air guitar it.”</p> <p>“Like I play the drums so the rhythm is kinda—you know. I get into it.”</p>

101: Textural Description

For 101, preferred music listening is an experience that includes memories of what was going on the first time he heard the song, positive changes in his mood, and a focus on certain elements of the music, along with the relation of these elements to his being a musician himself.

While listening to his favorite music, 101 remembers what was going on the first time he heard it. This can be a memory of time spent with others or by himself. By the end of the interview it had occurred to him that, without his realizing it, “...every time I heard (the song), I felt the way I felt...because that’s the way I felt when I first heard it or when I was first talking about it with someone.” One favorite song brought back memories of spending time with his sister during the summer after her first year away at college, when she introduced him to the song. Another favorite song brought back memories of hearing it for the first time while he was physically ill, and how hearing it made him feel better.

When his thoughts are with the music, 101 listens mostly to the instrument in a song that he considers “the standout.” Although the standout varies from song to song, 101 is a musician himself, and often, this is an instrument that he has experience playing. He imagines himself playing along with what he hears sometimes, “...trying to figure out, like, how difficult that would be to play.”

101 also feels himself sometimes “get(ting) into” the rhythm of his favorite songs, a connection expressed physically with slight movements in his head and feet, and enhanced by his experience playing the drums.

In one case, 101 had discovered that the lyrics of a favorite song made him feel “sad,” and were incongruous with what he otherwise heard as a “happy” song. The result was his decision to ignore the subject matter of the song. “Sometimes I’ll like, just isolate the lyrics and not really pay attention to them just because I like the music of the song so much.” Short of pretending there is no singer at all, 101 says, “I hear [the words] I just don’t really, like, process it.”

101 has an awareness of the musical elements in his favorite songs, such as loudness, tempo and instrumentation, and he also gives less-concrete examples, such as a song’s “picking up.” He acknowledges the musical elements contributing to this “picking up,” also adding, “and it just feels like a much happier song.”

101 uses music as a way to make himself feel better in difficult situations, such as feeling physically ill or earning a poor grade on a test. When feeling sad, he chooses “relaxing” music that is easy to “keep up with,” and then he might work through a problem in his mind to make himself feel better. He also might be presented with a song that has the effect of “picking up,” and experience a positive effect on his mood as a

result.

101: Imaginative Variation

The Imaginative Variation is an opportunity for the researcher to explore new perspectives from which to see the data from each interview. These non-factual descriptions attempt to capture the qualities of the music listening experience in ways the participant may not have been able to express with words. For each, the researcher has imagined the participant within a conceptualized experience of listening to favorite music.

The following piece of writing arose largely from the problem-solving aspects of 101's music listening, the way he would think his way through his problems and create his own solutions for improving his condition. This is represented by the character's creation of light, which allows him to function happily and remember the formative learning experiences that enabled him to do so. Each element of the music is represented here by a physical element, with the exception of rhythm, which is represented by the generator. The substance called "verbosium" represents the lyrics of a song – still there, but left out of the experience that 101 has manufactured for himself for the desired effect.

Allen and the Homemade Star

Allen is an amateur chemist in the dark. He is single, a young inventor who works independently in his home laboratory. Mostly he putters around leisurely, but occasionally he lands on a discovery worthy of a mention in the local newspaper. The power has gone out all along his country road, and the battery of his mobile phone is dead. But it doesn't matter; the maintenance crews won't reach him until morning, anyway. Allen lives well outside of town, and the sun is setting. Yellow light beams

from the modest windows, splayed across the adjacent wall.

Drawn to his cabinet of raw elements and chemical compounds, Allen begins working his way through the problem in the waning daylight. In the center of a large metal plate connected to an antique electrical generator, he instinctively blends tiny amounts of fine powders and liquids, like a chef adding just the right seasoning to a pot of soup. He is confident as he adds many ingredients, considering the unique character of each as it goes into the mix, but he is anxious after adding a little of a wrong ingredient, the powder verbosium, by accident. Allen understands this to be an effective resource for his colleagues, but is uncomfortable with it himself, knowing the hazardous situations that may result from its use. To avoid further accidents, he locks this element in a cabinet across the room, still visible behind the glass door.

After recovering from his mistake, Allen stirs the materials on the plate, arranges them carefully into a small pile and moves over to the foot pedal of his rusty old generator. Holding a table for support, he stomps the pedal steadily as the heavy inner mechanisms of the machine come groaning to life. His intention is to send just the right amount of electrical current into the plate for the desired effect – a miniature atomic reaction – well contained, safe and under control. With some degree of effort, he begins to see the sparks emitting from his concoction until one of them ignites a chain reaction in the substance. The materials suck inward toward the central point, now a blinding dot of light hovering just slightly above the plate. Allen stands back breathing deeply in satisfaction; he has built a tiny star, a scale model of the sun in extreme miniature, right there in his laboratory. It emits enough light to illuminate the corners of the room, and he knows it will burn this way for several hours.

As he leafs through a colorful nature magazine later that night, Allen remembers fondly the professors who provided him the knowledge he uses in the lab, and the first time as a child that he appreciated the magic of the night sky.

101: Revised Themes

After completing the Imaginative Variation and further contemplating the data, the researcher reorganized the themes into structures. The goal was to describe the music listening experience more fully by explaining why the co-researchers have the experience they do. Following is a breakdown of the themes from 101's interview, revised and organized into structures of experience. This breakdown provides the basis for the Structural Variation that follows.

- **Emotional memories of hearing the music for the first time**
 - Revisiting:
 - Personal connections
 - Interpersonal connections
- **The listener's relationships with different musical elements**
 - The Standout Instrument
 - Focus on it
 - Thinking about playing it himself
 - Rhythm
 - Getting into it
 - Facilitating the entire process, allowing the process to begin and continue
 - Subject Matter
 - Ignoring it
 - Tempo
 - Connecting it to a perceived mood of the music
 - The Density of the Mix
 - How many sounds are happening
 - The number of notes playing in each measure
- **The listener is engaged in a process to improve his mood while listening**
 - Experienced as something he is doing
 - Experienced as something the music does for him.

- **The elements coming together to create feelings within the listener, which are projected onto the music, and perceived as being a part of the music**
 - “Picking up”
 - “Relaxing”
 - “A much happier song”
 - “A perceived change in tempo”

101: Structural Description

The structures that exist within 101’s experience of listening to preferred music are: his personal and interpersonal connections to the music, which are tied to memories of the events surrounding his first experience listening to the music, the many co-occurring interactions he has with different elements of the music, the positive feelings experienced by 101 as a result of these relationships playing out, and finally, the projection of these feelings onto the music, and his perception of these as part of the music itself.

When 101 listens to his favorite music, he remembers the way he was introduced to the music, revisiting the thoughts and feelings he had when he first listened. He places importance on these experiences, and can recall them in vivid detail when aided by the music.

101 has different relationships with the elements he notices in the music. A steady *rhythm* helps him connect to the music mentally as his body sometimes moves in time with the beat. The initial connection formed by the rhythm allows 101 to interact with the music deeply enough and over time so he may engage with the other elements of the music and the listening experience in general.

After becoming familiar with a favorite song, 101 pays particular attention to the instrument or sound heard by him as the *most prominent sound*. While listening, he often

thinks of playing that part himself on the same instrument. Sometimes he has actually learned to play the song and he remembers what it feels like to play the part he hears. Other times, he hears that the part is very difficult and imagines being challenged while trying to replicate the part.

During the listening experiences for this study, 101 did not engage with the *subject matter* of the lyrics in the music. There were lyrics that he felt did not match the mood of the music, nor the mood that he wanted to achieve by listening, and he was able to remove the meaning of the lyrics from his listening experience. While discussing another song, 101 made no mention of the lyrics or subject matter of the song.

The *tempo* of a song contributes to 101's perception of that song's having a certain mood. He experiences certain songs as being happy because of the fast tempo of the music. When he has a change in mood based on a piece of music, he experiences that music as having an increase in tempo, even if the beats-per-minute of the song remains the same.

The *number and range of sounds* happening during a piece of music also seem to play a role – that is, the number of different instruments and voices in the music, and the number of notes that each instrument plays in a given measure, along with the range of high and low tones. 101 acknowledges that the entrance of a piano contributes to positive feelings he experiences during the music, and a greater amount of subdivisions happening in the music may also make it seem to 101 that the tempo is increasing. A song that he described as being “happy” contained many instruments, all playing many notes. This included his standout instrument, the piano, frantically playing a wide range of notes.

As 101 interacts with all of these musical elements, he feels a positive change in

his mood, sometimes experienced as an active process (like when he thinks through a problem logically with the aid of carefully selected music), sometimes as a passive process. It appears that during these passive experiences, he engages with the musical elements listed above, experiences a change in mood, which he then attributes the change to the music itself, for example when he experiences a piece of music as being “relaxed,” “happier” or “picking up.” In all these cases, he describes the music in the same way he would describe his own mood.

Participant 102

102 is a 17 year old Caucasian male who enjoys spending time with friends and mixed martial arts fighting. He does not play an instrument. He listened and described his reactions to three favorite songs for the interview, which lasted for about 45 minutes total. Participant 102 also spoke frequently about a wide variety of songs not chosen for this interview.

The following table displays the themes of 102’s music listening experience, and examples of how the co-researcher described or alluded to these themes. This organization of thoughts is the basis for the Textural Description that follows.

Original Theme	Selected Instances of the Theme as Stated by the Co-Researcher * - Indicates a reference to a song not played during this listening session
Fond memories (including memories of friends and of playing sports)	<p>“A song always has a story about it.”</p> <p>“Uh, one of my friends, [name], we were at a party once and he was singing it, for, probably like 20 minutes and since then I’m always gonna think of him anytime I hear this song.”</p>

	<p>“Well I think it, most songs unless it’s my first time hearing it, most songs I’ll listen to it it’ll remind me of like of a person or a group of people” *</p> <p>“...anytime I hear that I think of the car ride up like just being excited to go to the concert and just listening to music with everybody and having a good time. So it always reminds me of that.” *</p> <p>“I used to skateboard all the time and there’s certain songs I used to like, like a lot back then. If I hear them it’ll remind of of like skateboarding and all that I used to do, so it kinda goes along with that in some songs” *</p> <p>“Um, there’s songs that we would play at the gym when we were training, so like, songs like that, and like a lot of like hype songs like faster ones” *</p>
<p>Strong feelings from the past</p>	<p>“My ex-girlfriend, like we used to have um like a song together, and now I don’t like that song anymore just because it’s associated with her.” *</p> <p>“...if I’m having a like really good day and like I’ll be I’ll listen to that song, then I’ll like that song more ... because I was in a good mood when I was like listening to it. Opposed to like if I was having a really bad day, and then I listen to a song and then be like a few days later and I listen to the song again and I’m like, “oh I don’t want to listen to that, like that reminds me of having a bad day the other day.” *</p> <p>“If it could remind me of like a bad time or like something bad that happened, then yeah...it would put me in a bad mood probably.” *</p>
<p>Responding to elements in the music (including the subject matter of the lyrics and the upbeat feel of the music)</p>	<p>“Um, I like that it’s about like living the college lifestyle and stuff and like I’m gonna be doing that soon, so it kinda makes me think about, look forward to that,</p>

	<p>wanna do that”</p> <p>“Like If I’m going away like leaving the neighborhood and like meeting all new people and living a whole different life like changing everything, just how that’s gonna be”</p> <p>“Basically like, there’s so many songs on that that’ll make me like, ‘all right, yeah, I should do good in school.’” *</p> <p>“Uh I guess at the beginning when it starts out slow before he starts like rapping, like it’s it’s I guess it’s like calmer, you would say, I don’t know if that’s the right word but calmer, and then like when the beat gets like more, like there’s more put into the beat then it’s like, uh, I don’t know how to explain it, like uh, more upbeat I guess.”</p> <p>“...It makes me like feel better then, or excited (mumbles) the beat, cause it goes from being slow to pretty fast.”</p>
<p>Listening style</p>	<p>“Well usually I mean usually I’ll be on like other websites just looking, dumb stuff, just doing dumb stuff online or just doing homework or something” (while listening)</p> <p>“...there’s some songs where the first part will be really good or the last part will be really good and I’ll skip to the end or I’ll just I’ll listen to the first part and just change the song”</p> <p>“And the other way around, I mean, it’s not just lyrics. Like, if like, the music in one song is really good at the end, I’ll like skip the lyrics to just go listen to the end” *</p>

102: Textural Description

For 102, preferred music listening is an experience that includes fond memories, mostly involving his friends, but also from participating in athletic activities. Hearing

music causes 102 to revisit strong feelings from previous times he has listened, which can affect his enjoyment of the music. He responds to elements in the music, especially the subject matter of the lyrics and the “upbeat” nature of his music, which can help him feel both motivated and excited. 102 usually plays music while doing something else, but when the music is his main activity, he often listens to a short favorite segment of a song, instead of the entire thing, before moving onto another song in his collection.

“A song always has a story about it,” says 102 about his favorite music. He can recall many occasions when music has played a prominent role during interactions with his friends, and hearing the music triggers those memories. “One of my friends, [name], we were at a party once and he was singing it, for, probably like 20 minutes and since then I’m always gonna think of him anytime I hear this song,” he says. This same kind of association causes him to dislike a song that he shared with his ex-girlfriend. Music can also bring about memories of the time in his life when 102 spent a lot of time skateboarding. Some fast songs, known as “hype songs,” can make 102 think of working out at the gym. 102 has other thoughts as well while listening, as he says of one memory, “but, it’s not like I’m, like, dwelling on that...[for] the whole song...my mind definitely, like, goes onto other things.”

102 often engages with the subject matter from lyrics of his favorite music. A song about being a college student makes him feel excited his own future college experiences. A song about his home city of Philadelphia makes him feel proud for the city. Sometimes, lyrics of a song can help 102 feel motivated to succeed in school. Speaking of a particular album’s lyrics, he says, “there’s a lot of it where it’ll say like, ...you’re being lazy...you’re not doing what you should be doing.” 102 recognizes that

some of the lyrics could be perceived by others as celebrating the negative behavior, but for him the meaning is that focus and hard work will lead to success. The right song can also keep 102 in a good mood throughout a school day.

Aside from the lyrics, 102 acknowledges how the musical elements, some more concrete than others, can contribute to his good mood. Hearing an increasing number of sounds in a beat changes the sound from “calmer” to “more upbeat” in his experience, and makes him feel “better then, or more excited.” He mentions that a song would be “completely different if the beat was different, [if] it was slowed down.” For another song, he talks about how “the whole sound of it, it’s just good vibes,” which in turn puts him in a good mood. Sometimes a song introduced to 102 by his friends can be appealing for it’s being “completely different,” being of a new or unfamiliar style.

102 typically plays music in the background while doing other things, such as browsing the Internet or doing homework. When he is focused on the music, he often listens to short clips of songs instead of listening from the beginning to the end. Sometimes he listens to one rapper’s verse within a longer song, or to one instrumental solo, for as little as 10 seconds before moving along to something else. He uses a similar approach when looking for a song he likes on a newly procured album or mixtape, listening to a few seconds of each track until finding something he feels is worth hearing all the way through.

102: Imaginative Variation

The Imaginative Variation is an opportunity for the researcher to explore new perspectives from which to see the data from each interview. These non-factual descriptions attempt to capture the qualities of the music listening experience in ways the

participant may not have been able to express with words. Each is an attempt for the researcher to imagine the interview participant within a conceptualized experience of listening to favorite music.

The following piece of writing arose from the many differences, real and perceived, between the researcher and the participant. The description elaborates on an imagined view of the circumstances that could have led to these biographical differences, giving credibility to an experience so different from the researcher's own. There is an emphasis on speed, in relation to the way the actual participant would skim through his music so quickly and distractedly. Each of the participant's favorite songs is depicted here as a physical place – as a kind of storage space for memories, and the promise of the future.

Benjamin and the Loud City

It's late, and Benjamin is cruising around the rain-soaked downtown streets. His lean figure relaxes back in the driver's seat of his sporty black convertible. Back at university he was a star athlete, a runner. Though he got sidetracked his junior year when he began his Internet startup company, the same one he has just sold to foreign investors for a small fortune. Eager for a new adventure, he's leaving town in the morning to start an amazing new business partnership across the country. The movers will have his place set up by the time he arrives tomorrow afternoon.

Up and down the main arteries and the tight side streets: restaurants, nightclubs, cafes go whizzing past on both sides. Echoes of the past – laughing cheers, toasts to his success, and the argument with Rachel that ended everything – they all ring in his head, a sort of clamor that forces the music blaring from the car stereo into the periphery.

Without thinking about it, he drives across the river and back to avoid her neighborhood altogether.

He feels a rush from the speed of the car, the boom of the speakers, the scribble of the lights and signs illuminated against the dark. But even where the most delicious memories are, he's barely slowing down. There's too much out there to stop for any one thing and besides, the sun is coming up soon and he has a plane to catch. This city will always have a place in his heart, though. He rolls up to a red light and checks the messages on his phone.

102: Revised Themes

After completing the Imaginative Variation and further contemplating the data, the researcher reorganized the themes into structures. The goal is to describe the music listening experience more fully by explaining why the co-researchers have the experience they do. Following is a breakdown of the themes from 102's interview, revised and organized into structures of experience. This breakdown provides the basis for the Structural Variation that follows.

- **The music is valued for the connections it has to 102's past, present and future**
 - **The past**
 - Memories from friends, events, parties
 - Memories of another time or place
 - skating
 - working out at the gym
 - strong feelings from a previous time listening
 - **The Present**
 - Values
 - Appreciation of something "different" because of developing values
 - Preference for a song about his home city reflects his value on the city.
 - Changing the present moment

- Improvement of mood during school
- Music playing while doing something else – Internet or homework
- **The Future**
 - Motivation about what needs to get done
 - Understanding how contrasting points of view exist, aside from his own.
 - Excitement about having fun during the upcoming weekend
 - Thoughts about what college will be like
- **The Music changes the way he experiences these thoughts**
 - Change in mood, feeling excited
 - Subject Matter
 - Changes in the music – feelings projected onto the music
- **Listening Style**
 - Listening to a short bit of the song
 - Modifying the experience to suit needs
 - Taking control
 - Exercising freedom

102: Structural Description

Structurally, 102 often values music for the role it plays in his engagement with the past, the present and the future. 102 acknowledges that elements in the music itself can change or enhance that experience. He modifies his personal listening experiences to closely suit his personal preferences, selecting only the segments of songs he wants to listen to.

Often, the music listening experience is closely connected to people, feelings and stages from 102's past. If a song is important to 102, it likely has a connection to a friend or a group of friends, and is tied to memories of spending time with those people.

Whether a song was last heard within the past few days, or years prior, a song can bring up feelings and thoughts for 102 that are similar to those he had when he last listened. If a song brings up a negative association, 102 will avoid that song to avoid thinking those thoughts and being in a bad mood. On the other hand, many of the songs 102 likes and

chooses to listen to have positive emotional connections to the past.

The value of music in the present is often connected to the values that 102 has outside of the music. The value he places on his city of origin helps him also to see the value in a song about the city. Because of the value he places on his friends, a song or album can be accepted in part because it has been recommended and seen valuable by his peers, whose opinions he accepts. Music also adds an extra dimension to his experience of the present. 102 plays music while engaged in other activities, such as homework or browsing the internet. A song in his head can keep him in a positive mood throughout the school day.

102's music aids him in looking ahead to the future, both in the short term and long term. He thinks about his future as a college student while hearing a favorite song about being away at school. Listening to the right music helps him feel motivated and energized both about upcoming plans with friends, and to manage forthcoming challenges at school and work. Sometimes 102's hearing a motivational message in the lyrics of his music is based on his own interpretation; he acknowledges that other listeners may get a different message from hearing the same song.

While 102 often focuses on the subject matter of his favorite music, he also notices other elements in the music that shape his listening experience. He can point out specific musical descriptions, like the sound of a guitar and a place in a song where more elements are added into a beat, but he often describes these in terms of the feelings he has while listening, for example when he thinks of a song as having "good vibes," or when he experiences a song as feeling calmer when there is less happening in the music.

102 has a listening style that caters very closely to his personal preferences. He

often listens to his favorite music in short segments of songs instead of complete songs. This listening experience is a series of short favorite segments of different songs in a row, some as short as 10 seconds, a style made possible by the digital format of his music collection, and the fact that the music itself is more easily accessible than it once was. With the ability to cue up a track to any specific point so easily, 102 has empowered himself to skip past sections of music that he finds less appealing.

Participant 103

103 is a 16 year old African American male who enjoys skateboarding, mixed martial arts fighting and video games, and who plays the guitar. He listened and gave reactions to three songs during this interview, which lasted about 60 minutes in total.

The following table displays the themes of 103's music listening experience, and examples of how the co-researcher described or alluded to these themes. This organization of thoughts is the basis for the Textural Description that follows.

Original Theme	Selected Instances of the Theme as Stated by the Co-Researcher * - Indicates a reference to a song not played during this listening session
Emotional memories of sharing music with friends and family	<p>“And, when I always listen to that song, I always think back to that time where me and like, I had this friend, and like she, she was like a sister to me, and she introduced me to the song.”</p> <p>“And I just started listening to this song more and more and more, and then I just remember sometimes we’d be walking down South Street or Broad Street, just singing the song as loud as we can.”</p> <p>“So every time I hear the song, it reminds me of all the good times I had and I liked</p>

	<p>it.”</p> <p>“But I just remember, just doing all those things with him, just how me and him would have so much fun everyday. Like I’d meet up with him after school, we’d go do something, just hang out. That’s what it really reminds me of.”</p> <p>“And the way I feel about that is, um if it wasn’t for my brother, I don’t think I’d ever know about this. A song so good like this.”</p> <p>“I do miss things, like the way they were but the reason why (the music) makes me happy is that I’ll at least have memories to look back on.”</p>
<p>Admiration of the musical arrangement</p>	<p>“And then it comes all rough and every— electric guitars just get thrown in there and drum beats just hard and heavy. Just going at it...and it just makes me think like, wow, how did they just put all that together?”</p> <p>“Like in the order everything came in, like the guitar and then the drums and then, then the singers. So, I just like the order and the way it was all put together, it’s perfect.”</p>
<p>Thoughts of being in the audience or onstage during a concert</p>	<p>“Sometimes when everything gets thrown together I just think about, how like if I was at a concert, how everybody’d just go crazy, just hearing all that, just all going at once.”</p> <p>“I’d probably feel like I just feel like raising my hands and then just like, flicking a lighter and then just going along with it going in a mosh pit, everybody’s going to be pushing everybody around, and just things will chill out and then they’ll get really fast again, it’s just something I would like to experience.”</p> <p>“And then sometimes it just has me thinking like, ‘wow, what if I was actually</p>

	<p>in this band playing this song, imagine how like electrified everybody'd be, like, everybody'd be jumping up,' and I'd make sure I play it perfectly every time, just adding my own stuff in it and just make it even better"</p>
<p>Thoughts of playing the song on the guitar</p>	<p>"Sometimes when I listen to it, I, like hear it in headphones I just think, 'I wanna, I wanna learn this song on the guitar.'"</p> <p>"If it's something I feel like learning how to play, I tune out the drums and listen to the guitar."</p> <p>"Some songs, when I listen to 'em I can learn how to play them cause I can hear 'em by ear, and I'm just like, 'okay well let me try this note, let me try this one, let me try this chord,' and I'll see how it sounds and then I'll just keep going over and over, til I get it right." *</p>
<p>Being moved by the music</p>	<p>"Yeah, like every time the bass hits me, I move, myself, and just cause I can dance to the bass cause it sounds so nice and loud."</p> <p>"...it's like the whole place is just shaking and you, then you can connect with it even more, cause it's, if everything else is moving, you're gonna be moving with it."</p> <p>"the sound of it just makes me move, it makes me like, makes me wanna make the same type of noises. That's why I like it so much."</p> <p>"Yeah that's what I mean, like want to hear, like, every time I hear that noise, it makes me want to tap my foot and go along with it, and just, Move with it, like physically."</p>
<p>Using movements to add his own flair to his favorite music</p>	<p>"Every time I hear one of those noises, like it just moves me and then, like when I hear like the sound of a bass on a drum, it just makes me like, like you're just hearing the steady bass like (taps foot 4 times), and then you add something else in it, it just</p>

	<p>makes me want to add something more in it, and that's when I tap my foot to go along with it.”</p> <p>“Like I want to add my own like, flair, like sometimes in my mind when I'm, when I hear that, I'm just thinking like something else I can do like, let's say you're going like (pats his lap 3 times) that, I can go like (pats lap 7 times) that. Like add something different.”</p>
<p>Thinking about skateboarding</p>	<p>“That song just brings back memories from last summer, about skateboarding to it...aw, skateboarding to that song's amazing.”</p> <p>“While I'm listening to it, I'm like, 'hmm, this would go good with this,' like...sometimes I can hit a trick right on like a certain part of the song, like let's say I'm just skating down the street, song just stops, I'm in the air, and the second it turns back on, I'm landing on the ground, something like that. Like I love just thinking about certain things like that, like 'that would look nice.' Or sometimes, I'm thinking about it, and I'm thinking about landing the trick that I really want to do, down like a, a set of stairs. Or like down a gap, over a gap, like on a rail.”</p> <p>“I daydream really easy. About like, skateboarding to this song or doing something else and when, there's like three songs later I'll realize I was daydreaming the whole time, not listening to the song.”</p>
<p>Thinking about how the music could be added to a visual component</p>	<p>“...one thing I think of, when I'm listening to a song, is how I can use it for a video.”</p> <p>“I've put songs to videos before, like, certain skate videos I've put songs to, or fight videos.”</p> <p>“Like, when we're usually outside, boxing, having the gloves on, you know just like going, wrestling out, or sparring or</p>

	<p>something like that, I've always put songs and things like that like videos on youtube and things like that.”</p> <p>“And um, I just remember being on the bus ride just going all the way up to school and just remembered these certain parts, and I just imagined, that day, that I was listening to that song, I was like, “hmm, I wonder what a music video would be like for this song.” And I just imagined the music video like, band, just being in like some goofy outfit, in like a dark room, and like their faces just appearing all over, everywhere, like and then it just keep going dark over and over.”</p>
<p>Non-concrete characterizations of the music</p>	<p>“Like I didn't think they, it was like wow. So they get pretty deep with stuff like that. Some of their other songs too get really deep, and heavy...”</p> <p>“And it just sounded like, light, it wasn't deep, it just sounded nice and light. And it just, and all the drums just bounced off, over and over, just real quick.”</p>
<p>Listening loudly with lots of bass</p>	<p>“I think the way I like the song the most, that night, was I had a pair of headphones, like these big Panasonic earphones, and I plugged them into like, my uh, speakers and everything back there and I put it to my ear. It was the best bass ever. Like, the loudest bass, it went straight to your ears, it goes right to your brain and you can just hear it perfectly. And it, and I turned it all the way up, and I turned the headphones all the way up. And I just felt like, like I could just, ah...”</p> <p>“And it's just bumping and just gets me hyped for some reason, I don't know. I just love it.”</p> <p>“I love the music better when it's louder...cause when it's low, you don't really get it, like the full effect, you're just sitting there, (in exaggerated flat voice)</p>

	<p>‘Oh. I can’t really hear it I’m just. Wait, what did he say?’ (end flat voice)”</p>
<p>Listening to key songs in the morning</p>	<p>“It’s something I listen to in the morning, it’s something that I want to listen to in the morning. Because it’ll just wake me up and make me feel (alert?) and make me wanna jump up and just get, do what I gotta do.”</p> <p>“You think it’s just gonna be a nice little song, but then when it just comes out like that, it’s like, yes, now I can just wake up, like it sounds so good just waking up to something like that, especially when you’ve got a voice just yelling.”</p> <p>“...it’s like a morning ritual, I have to do it every morning when I wake up, that’s the only way I start my day off.”</p>
<p>Ignoring the meaning of the lyrics in his favorite music</p>	<p>“And I wanted to learn the lyrics for this song because I wanted to know what the song was about. Still never really, I don’t really, after that I didn’t really care, cause I’m older now and I never felt like figuring it out.”</p> <p>“Lyrics don’t mean anything to me anymore.”</p> <p>“I’m listening to the lyrics, but I’m not listening to the message of the lyrics.”</p> <p>“Some people write songs saying they’re a good person, then you read about ‘em, couple months later that they’re in jail. And they had nothing to do with any of that, and they’re not making anything of their lives...I might look up to these people so much. And then if I got too into it and started like really listening to what they got to say, “well oh yeah they’re cool, they, they’re trying to say something.” Well let’s say one of them killed somebody. I would have no respect for them, I’d just feel like ‘wow’ I, I wouldn’t like their music anymore. All because of something they did cause I looked up to ‘em.” *</p>

	<p>“I’d hate to see myself hate a band just because of something they did.” *</p>
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103: Textural Description

For 103, listening to preferred music is a process that involves emotional memories of sharing music with friends and family, admiration for the musical arrangement, thoughts about being in the audience or onstage during a concert, thoughts of playing the song on the guitar, being moved by the music, using those movements to add his own flair to his favorite music, thinking about skateboarding, thinking about how the music might effectively be added to a visual component, and a non-concrete characterization of the music. 103 has a listening style where he prefers listening loudly and with a lot of “bass,” listening to key songs in the morning, and ignoring the meanings of the lyrics in the songs.

103 can recount vivid stories of when he first heard each of his favorite songs, when he got the CD and other surrounding events (certain listening experiences, the cold weather outside, riding the bus, etc). His stories are aided by the strong emotional memories he has when he listens to the music, especially of friends and family he has shared the music with in the past. 103 moved to a new neighborhood for the current school year, so listening to certain music can make him feel nostalgic for friends he used to see more often. The music helps him remember what it was like being with certain friends. For example, “We’d be in her car or my car, driving down the highway, just listening to this song, turned all the way up.” He explains, “I just imagine those things, like while I’m listening to it, like how much I just wanna be in the car right now, just riding around, just listening to this song.” But the music can also make him feel “happy

and bright,” because it helps him remember past experiences with his friends. “The last thing I want to remember,” he says, “is us having a bad time.”

One part of the music listening experience that captures 103’s attention is the arrangement of the song, or as he says, “the way everything’s put together.” He finds pleasure in hearing different sounds playing together. “I like the way the guitar, the drums, the singing, just all of it put together just, made me feel really happy,” he says. Sometimes, this has to do with the surprising dynamic shifts that occur throughout a song, as different instruments and voices enter and leave the mix over time to make a dynamic impact. Sometimes he simply admires the way the pieces have come together, describing one arrangement as “perfect.”

“Sometimes when everything gets thrown together I just think about, how, like if I was at a concert, how everybody’d just go crazy, just hearing all that, just all going at once.” Mental images of himself at a band’s concert are informed by videos and live performances 103 has seen on television. He describes his imagined experience as an audience member:

I’d probably feel...like raising my hands and then just, like, flicking a lighter and then just going along with it. Going in a mosh pit, everybody’s going to be pushing everybody around, and just things will chill out and then they’ll get really fast again. It’s just something I would like to experience.

During the music, 103 also imagines himself as a member of the band, playing the song onstage. He thinks, “Imagine how, like, electrified everybody’d be, like, everybody’d be jumping up, and I’d make sure I play it perfectly every time, just adding my own stuff in it and just make it even better.” 103 has this type of thought sometimes while falling asleep during music listening.

His participation in the music also has more realistic aspects. 103 plays the guitar, and he feels a desire sometimes to learn the guitar parts he is hearing. While listening for this purpose, he describes “tun(ing) out the drums” to hear the guitar better. Or, if he knows how to play it already, he might move his fingers in unison with the guitarist on the recording. He also feels a desire to move his body in time with the beat sometimes. He says, “every time I hear that noise, it makes me want to tap my foot and go along with it. And just move with it, like physically.”

As he mentioned as a part of his image of playing onstage with the band, 103 sometimes feels a desire to add something of his own to the music. He achieves this by creating additional rhythms in his mind or tapping them with his hands and feet, in order to “add (his) own flair,” to his music. He explains, “Sometimes in my mind...when I hear that, I’m just thinking [of] something else I can do. Like, let’s say [the music is] going like (pats his lap three times) that, I can go like (pats lap seven times) that. Like, add something different.” This activity would take place during songs that 103 feels “have a good beat.” In this case, he describes “tun(ing) out the guitar” so he can focus better on the drums.

103 loves skateboarding, and his favorite music can bring about memories or daydreams of skateboarding. He remembers the times he spent skating the previous summer, while listening to his song. “Aw, skateboarding to that song’s amazing,” he says. He thinks about what kind of tricks would look good during different parts of the music. He explains:

Sometimes I can hit a trick right on, like, a certain part of the song, like let’s say I’m just skating down the street, song just stops, I’m in the air, and the second it turns back on, I’m landing on the ground, something like that.

Sometimes daydreaming can distract 103 from the music, to the extent that he forgets that he is listening until well after the song has finished.

Another way that skateboarding informs 103's music listening experience is when he imagines a visual accompaniment for a piece of music. 103 produces videos of himself and his friends skateboarding, boxing, sparring and wrestling, which he edits to music and posts on the Internet. So when listening to a piece of music, he might consider what sort of video the song could be used for. He also has conceptualized music videos in which the band would appear. For one favorite song, he has imagined a music video with the band, "just being in like some goofy outfit, in like, a dark room, and like, their faces just appearing all over, everywhere, like, and then it just keep going dark, over and over."

Listening to favorite music can inspire non-concrete characterizations of the music in his mind. 103 thinks of some of his music as "heavy" and "deep," while other music is "light." He describes a song with a "good beat," in which, "all the drums just bounced off, over and over, just real quick." He describes the drums as having a certain "pop," as well.

103 feels his music sounds the best when it is turned up very loud and when he can hear the bass – the low frequencies in the mix – as well as possible. "It was the best bass ever," he says of one experience, "like, the loudest bass, it went straight to your ears, it goes right to your brain and you can just hear it perfectly." This experience had an impact on 103 that defied description. "I turned it all the way up, and I turned the headphones all the way up And I just felt like, like I could just, ah..." he says. 103 says this type of music listening makes it seem as though the music is physically shaking him and everything around him, a feeling that makes him excited, though he is not sure why

this is so.

103 begins every day with his favorite music, listening to two specific songs each morning. He finds this to be an essential part of his day. “It’s like a morning ritual. I have to do it every morning when I wake up. That’s the only way I start my day off.” His ritual provides him with the motivation and energy to get up and get ready for the day. 103 considers one of his morning songs very “heavy,” which he considers a positive thing. “It sounds so good just waking up to something like that, especially when you’ve got a voice just yelling,” he explains.

103 says that he used to be very interested in learning song lyrics, but this is less important now that he is older. He still likes the words in his favorite songs, and he sometimes tunes out other instruments to focus on the voices better. However 103 feels very strongly against letting the meaning of a song affect him in any way. “I’m listening to the lyrics, but I’m not listening to the message of the lyrics,” he says, because he has been disappointed in the past by musicians he has admired. He feels that if an artist performs a song with a positive message, and then fails to live up to the image he has created for himself with that song (by committing a violent crime, for example), 103 will be too disappointed to enjoy the music anymore. Describing a hypothetical performer with inauthentic song lyrics, he says, “They’re nothing. They’re just doing it to do it – they’re just doing it for the money. They don’t care about anything.” On the other hand, if he ignores those meanings, he won’t be affected if the musician exhibits negative behavior, and he will continue enjoying the music. “I’d hate to see myself hate a band just because of something they did,” he explains.

103: Imaginative Variation

The Imaginative Variation is an opportunity for the researcher to explore new perspectives from which to see the data from each interview. These non-factual descriptions attempt to capture the qualities of the music listening experience in ways the participant may not have been able to express with words. Each is an attempt for the researcher to imagine the interview participant within a conceptualized experience of listening to favorite music.

The following description arose from the visceral descriptions of music listening by 103, and the way he exercises his creativity to make the music a more enriching experience for himself. The storm represents the piece of music with the wind and chaos portraying the physical shaking feelings described by the participant. The character's artistic endeavor represents 103's creative urges in regard to the music, and the mourning in the story refers to the memories he has of his friends while listening.

Cameron and the Storm

Cameron is a professional photographer and he's getting close to the sweet spot. Navigating his gray Toyota pickup from daylight into darkness, he wrenches the wheel against a fierce gust of wind. The radio, lying next to his camera in the passenger seat, chatters away with detailed information about the storm, competing with the white noise of the menace outside. In the distance ahead, he sees planks from a fence tumbling along the horizon. At least there's no traffic; he cruises past a steady stream of cars and trucks, all headed in the opposite direction.

For seven years, Cameron has chased tornadoes up and down the U.S. Midwest, capturing breathtaking images of the monstrous storms each spring and summer. For the first three years, he was part of a team traveling in two vans of sophisticated equipment.

The team, himself plus six scientists on a mission to study the phenomenon, dissolved after a particularly wild storm took the lives of three members. This included Theresa, who was the team leader and Cameron's older sister by four years.

Finally in sight of the storm, he hits the brakes and stumbles out of the car door with his camera strapped around his neck. And he lets his mind flash to a scene of his sister as high school freshman. She drops a book of incredible natural images on top of whatever comic book hero he is sketching in pencil. The storms in the book embody the fury of God Himself, the whole universe falling at the feet of that majestic terror. Cam and Theresa will spend hours that night at the dining room table, no TV, just leafing through the pages together in wonder.

Years later, he will join up with his sister and make a living selling amazing images to popular nature magazines. But after losing the framework of the team, Cameron will make a turn toward fine art. He'll spend the fall and winter in a basement studio, enhancing giant prints from tornado season with other media. Sometimes splatters of paint, sometimes a blowtorch, sometimes he'll add folds or dents to the shiny photo paper for added dimension, or maybe he'll use the print as a movie screen, and project a montage of old home videos onto it.

This career shift has sent Cameron careening out of the public eye and into small galleries, where the attention is local instead of national. Still he finds that his new work is more in line with what he wanted all along. It helps him express remorse for his lost teammates, but also to stay connected and to remember all the incredible adventures they had together.

Cameron struggles to hold his feet to the ground, snapping pictures of the windy

beast in the otherworldly yellow glow. The entire world is crashing up and down around him, and his face forms an ecstatic grin. This storm is his creation, his tribute. It is perfect.

103: Revised Themes

After completing the Imaginative Variation and further contemplating the data, the researcher reorganized the themes into structures. The goal is to describe the music listening experience more fully by explaining why the co-researchers have the experience they do. Following is a breakdown of the themes from 103's interview, revised and organized into structures of experience. This breakdown provides the basis for the Structural Variation that follows.

- **Interacting with the music**
 - Admiration for musical arrangement
 - Parts playing at the same time
 - Sections playing one after the other
 - Sometimes hearing past one instrument to focus better on another
 - Reproducing the song, and adding new components
 - Thoughts of playing the song on the guitar
 - Confidence that he'll learn someday
 - Has mastered some songs already
 - Imagining himself on stage
 - Playing drum parts
 - Playing guitar parts and adding his own ideas
 - Using movement of hands and feet to add to the music
 - Creating extra rhythms mentally
 - Feeling physically moved by the music
 - The bass
 - Feeling shaken by the music
 - The sensation that the environment shakes as well
 - Enables him to move in rhythm or dance
 - Thoughts of being in the audience at the concert, in a big crowd of people pushing each other
 - Feeling- or movement-based characterizations of the music
 - Bouncing off
 - Pop of the drums
 - Heavy/Light
 - Daydreaming about skateboarding

- About executing tricks in time with the music
 - Sometimes forgetting about the music altogether
- Thinking about a visual for the music
 - Videos of himself and friends skateboarding and fighting
 - Conceptualizing a video with the song's performer
- **Identity and Values**
 - Emotional memories with friends and family
 - Spending time together
 - Skateboarding everyday
 - Listening to music
 - Vivid stories about hearing favorite songs for the first time
 - Often with friends or brother
 - Sometimes just memories with the music
 - Positive emotions surrounding the memories
 - How the music will affect him and how it will not
 - Music as a morning ritual, providing motivation and energy
 - Not allowing himself to be shaped by song meanings
 - Actively ignoring meaning to avoid disappointment in his favorite musicians

103: Structural Description

One main structure that exists within 103's experience of listening to preferred music is his interaction with the music, which often uses his creativity. This structure includes his admiration for the arrangement, focused listening to one instrument, thoughts of reproducing the song, wanting to add his own musical components, feeling a sense of movement from the music, daydreaming about skateboarding and thinking of visuals that could accompany the music in a video. The other structure is an expression of his identity and values, such as his old friends, and the ways he will and will not be affected by his favorite music.

Participant 103 interacts with the music directly, in many ways. He often admires the arrangement of the music he is listening to, both by feeling impressed with the sound of many instruments playing at once, and by enjoying the sequence of entrances and exits

by certain instruments and voices over time. When listening for a certain purpose, he listens past some elements to focus on what is happening within one area of the arrangement. An example is when he ignores the drums so he can hear the guitar better and learn how to play the part. 103 interacts with his favorite music by thinking about playing the parts, and imagining additional parts that he adds to the music. 103 knows how to play some of his favorite songs on the guitar, and is confident that he can learn additional favorites if he wants to. While listening, he imagines himself playing onstage with the band, sometimes augmenting the parts on the recording with his own original musical flourishes. In actuality, he also develops his own rhythms in his mind, or taps them out with his hands and feet while listening to a song with a beat that he likes.

Movement figures heavily into 103's listening process. Hearing the low frequencies of the music as loudly as possible can give him the pleasurable feeling that he and his surroundings are shaking. The "bass" can also allow him to move his body in rhythm or to dance. 103 sometimes imagines himself being at a concert, being pushed around as part of a huge crowd of fans. A sense of movement also informs the way 103 characterizes the music in his mind, as he provides colorful descriptions of the music based more on qualities of movement than on concrete descriptions of the performances, such as when he describes a drum beat as "bounc(ing) off, over and over, just real quick."

Hearing his favorite music can cause 103 to daydream about skateboarding, and especially the way it would look for him to execute a certain trick in perfect time with a musical cue. He sometimes becomes so involved in these daydreams that he can forget that he is listening to music at all. 103 also thinks about how his favorite songs would fit into the videos he makes of himself and his friends skateboarding or participating in

mixed martial arts. He has also conceptualized a music video, which would include members of the band, while listening.

103's style of music listening reflects his values in several ways. He experiences emotional memories while hearing his favorite music, and often these memories include friends and family members who are important to him. The music helps him remember what it was like spending time with those people, skateboarding with them, and listening to music with them. He can recount detailed stories of the first time he heard each of his favorite songs. These stories often include his friends or his brother, but sometimes they simply bring him back to a specific time and place where he remembers being moved by the music, like riding the bus, or playing video games. The music provides 103 with positive feelings, because he is glad to have so many good memories to look back on with the people from his life.

Some of 103's values are reflected in how he allows himself to be affected by music and how he does not. He uses music as a source of energy and motivation when he listens to his favorite songs each morning –songs that are very loud and complex. He enjoys the high levels of sensations this music provides in the morning. However, he refuses to consider the meaning of the lyrics of his favorite music, not wanting to feel disappointed when the band inevitably lets him down. With his strong set of ideals, 103 thinks poorly of musicians who use their song lyrics to create false images of themselves with the goal of making a profit, rather than expressing themselves authentically in their music.

Participant 104

104 is a 17 year old Caucasian female who plays the guitar and piano, enjoys lacrosse and likes to draw. She was interviewed shortly after waking up the day after her junior prom. She listened and gave reactions to two favorite songs during this interview, which lasted about 60 minutes. She also spoke frequently about a variety of other memorable music listening experiences during the interview.

The following table displays the themes of 104's music listening experience, and examples of how the co-researcher described or alluded to these themes. This organization of thoughts is the basis for the Textural Description that follows.

Original Theme	Selected Instances of the Theme as Stated by the Co-Researcher * - Indicates a reference to a song not played during this listening session
Managing mood	<p>“My mind is in so many places sometimes that I just need...slower music to calm me down.”</p> <p>“I think music just helps...It helps you like, calm and, like calm yourself and reflect.”</p> <p>“I guess whenever I have anxiety, or um, or I'm bored, music's just such a good release.” *</p> <p>Um, I don't know, I think it always gets me in like a positive mood, um, because...I think, the beat, and like the way it sounds,</p>
Thinking of playing the guitar	<p>“Um, that I want to play guitar. (laughs)”</p> <p>“...the second time I listen to the this, I'd kind of play along with it to the guitar to try and figure out the chords.”</p> <p>“Like, once I started playing guitar, I think that's what kind of clicked, um, within me like for music. Uh, cause you're so much more aware of...I guess the instrumental</p>

	<p>aspect about it” *</p> <p>“Um, it’s kind of like you can have control over something that you like so much and that’s so exciting...and it’s...like you can make it yours.” *</p> <p>“I know a lot of the time when I’m playing like I, I, I think like, it’s so, I can’t believe other people can’t experience the same thing.” *</p>
<p>Appreciating the music, sometimes for its non-concrete qualities</p>	<p>“It just flows, kind of.”</p> <p>“It just sounds good and relaxing”</p> <p>“It gets you something that you notice, but it’s not, it doesn’t jump out”</p> <p>“So like it doesn’t really need words for some of it, it doesn’t really need words...for it, it’s just, it’s very simple and it’s just one um, one sound, kind of.”</p> <p>“That’s why I don’t really like to listen to rap or stuff like that, because there’s so many words being thrown out at you, and so many beats” *</p> <p>“I guess it’s just like the two part harmony I guess it’s just like, um, feeling like wow, like two voices can sound so good um, and can compliment each other so much and...can work together so well.”</p>
<p>A personal connection to the song</p>	<p>“I think you can always like connect songs to what’s happening in your life at that time or what has happened.” *</p> <p>“But it’s true, there are so many things you can pull from songs and, uh, so many real life experiences that I kind of...so I guess I can, I can definitely identify with it, with that feeling like a song, that you feel, like it’s so personal that you feel like a part of it is written about you or written for you, in a way.” *</p>

	<p>“I guess I think about like things in my life, what I want to do and ah, what I want the summer to be like and, um, I don’t know, I, I guess I think about college too.”</p> <p>“And um, I think like once I have those experiences, think I can appreciate like what I have more, and ah, but I know like, I really do wanna, I like want something more than like what’s here.”</p>
<p>The role of music in a beloved film</p>	<p>“The reason I love a lot of the songs I do is because they’re in movies and they’re in certain scenes that I like, and love, and I connect to.” *</p> <p>“Like <i>Titanic</i>...I think that’s like the prime example of, um, how music can make you feel a certain way. Like people probably wouldn’t have cried it (laughs) if that song didn’t come on... it’s like key to the whole thing.” *</p>
<p>Imagining the song appearing in a visual scene</p>	<p>“Sometimes I like think, when I’m listening to songs, I’d like, I used to really wanna like for a job I wanted to like put um I wanted to make soundtracks for movies...I think that would be the coolest job.” *</p> <p>“A lot of times when I’m listening to music I can um, I can think of a certain time in a movie that I saw where like this, uh, I think ‘this song would work so perfectly into this moment’ and um, I think about that a lot.” *</p> <p>“And I also think about like, where I would listen to songs, like, um uh if I’m not having a good day I would like walk down the hallway...with a sad song, or like a band that um, like Radiohead maybe” *</p>
<p>“Clicking”</p>	<p>“I liked them all but um this one it, uh, right away it kind of clicked and I think like, people, it’s funny, I don’t know why people like cert- like the certain songs...Um, of what goes off when, in their brains, but I know that something just</p>

	<p>clicked.”</p> <p>“When you like something right off the bat, I think, um, you can call that one of your favorites, like if you can just listen over and over again.”</p>
<p>Slight, sometimes imperceptible reactions</p>	<p>“I think so, I mean no, like I think, I guess so cause I, I guess like subconsciously, like (coughs) I don’t really notice it, but like um, going back to that first time like the th-like my, the first time I got to like drive, myself. Um, I guess I’ll kinda always feel that feeling. I just won’t always notice it.”</p> <p>“I don’t like to sit still when I’m listening to music, unless it’s like uh, but it’s, when it’s something like this it’s fun to...I don’t, I don’t really notice I’m doing it (laughs) until like, after the song and I’m still doing it, and I realize that I am.”</p>
<p>Thoughts of the song’s performer</p>	<p>“...it helps because she is like, she’s such a woman of her generation.”</p> <p>“The words are, I think, it’s like all of her songs are so, um, are so meaningful (clears throat) and they’re so, like she’s just an amazing writer in general, Um, everything she writes I love.”</p>

104: Textural Description

For 104, listening to preferred music is a process that involves managing her mood, thinking of playing the guitar, appreciating the music (sometimes for its non-concrete qualities), a personal connection, the role of music in a beloved film, imagining the song appearing in a visual scene, a feeling of “clicking” that happens when the song is first heard, and which is re-experienced upon further listens, reactions so slight they are imperceptible, and possibly thoughts of the performer of the song.

104 listens to her favorite music to cope with stress and otherwise manage her

mood. She explains, “my mind is in so many places sometimes that I just need...slower music to calm me down.” She considers her favorite music to be a good release when she feels anxious or bored, finding that it can help her “calm myself and reflect.” This can take place alone or with friends. 104 noted that while modern pop and hip hop music can have some useful effects, like enhancing a thrilling moment with her friends or keeping up her energy at the gym, she mostly cites that music as a counterexample to the calming music that more often reflects her mood.

104 often feels the desire to play the guitar while she is listening to music, and often brings the guitar into the listening experience to figure out the chords. She feels that something about her music listening experience “clicked” when she discovered that she could play the songs herself. Able to figure out chords on the guitar or the piano without great effort, 104 feels excited by the idea that she can take control over her favorite music and make it her own. She says, “I can’t believe other people can’t experience the same thing.”

104 uses colorful phrases to characterize her favorite music. She experiences some music as seeming timeless, especially music from certain performers who have maintained credibility over a long period of time. Often, 104 enjoys music that she describes as “relaxing, and that “flows.” She talks about one favorite song being “steady,” “consistent,” and “simple.” “It gets you something you notice, but it doesn’t jump out,” she says, and “it’s not too much.” She experiences the sounds in the recording as coming together and forming, “one sound.” And she feels impressed when she hears that two singing voices can come together in harmony and “compliment each other...and can work together so well.” These descriptions contrast with the way 104

experiences upbeat rap music. In that music, “there’s so many words being thrown out at you, and so many beats,” that the music can cause an undesirable experience.

For the “simple” song described in the previous paragraph, 104 feels that the lyrics don’t matter, and that she mostly likes the chords, the melody and the overall sound. For another song, though, the sound of the song, along with the beat, has provided a gateway for her to explore the lyrics and connect to them on a deeply personal level. 104’s connections to her favorite music can be, “so personal that you feel like a part of it is written about you or written for you, in a way.” One way is a connection between the music and her own present and future. She considers timely issues while listening, like the fact that she has just one year remaining in high school, and the hopes she has for her summer travel plans, college and beyond. Sometimes the lyrics of a song can support these thoughts. A song introduced to 104 by her mother has themes of traveling and exploring, with lyrics that help 104 imagine herself expanding her horizons similarly to the way her mother did as a college student. “Once I leave school...I wanna travel and I wanna do so many more things than I can do here,” she says, an idea that helps her better connect to the song. “I think, like, once I have those experiences, (I) think I can appreciate like, what I have, more,” she explains.

104 also connects to songs because of their roles in her favorite movies. She identifies how songs have helped bring out the emotion of powerful scenes. Favorite movies have connected her with music she may not have liked or known about otherwise. Sometimes when listening, 104 thinks about scenes in movies, or even scenes from her own life that would play well against the song she is hearing. “A lot of times when I’m listening to music,” she says, “I can think of a certain time in a movie that I saw...I think,

‘this song would work so perfectly into this moment.’” 104 expressed interest in having a job where she could choose soundtrack music for movies.

104 defines a favorite song by two attributes. The first is that the song “clicks,” for her the first time she hears it (and that this continues upon further listens), and the second is that it doesn’t wear itself out over time. Although some of her past favorite songs have not stood up to repeated listens, 104 can listen to them now and revisit the feelings that she had about them when she first listened.

Sometimes these feelings or reactions can be so subtle for 104 that she does not notice them. For example, she feels the same feeling of independence every time she listens to the song that played during her first trip in a car by herself, but she might not always notice or acknowledge this feeling. And when listening to music, she tends to move her body in some sort of steady motion, but this may be so slight that she does not notice the movement until the song has ended.

Finally, 104 gave vivid descriptions about her admiration for a favorite musical performer, calling her at points an, “iconic and strong individual,” and, “such a woman of her generation.” It was not totally clear whether this was a response to the music listening experience itself, or whether this strong reaction was simply a result of 104’s discussing her favorite music with another person.

104: Imaginative Variation

The Imaginative Variation is an opportunity for the researcher to explore new perspectives from which to see the data from each interview. These non-factual descriptions attempt to capture the qualities of the music listening experience in ways the participant may not have been able to express with words. Each is an attempt for the

researcher to imagine the interview participant within a conceptualized experience of listening to favorite music.

The following piece of writing arose from 104's descriptions of her music as "flowing," and her intentions to follow a life path similar to the one traveled by her mother, with the boat as a metaphor for the song. Pulling to the side of the river to use the boat as protection and examine her reflection in the water represents listening experiences that similarly allow her to "calm and reflect." Using the sail on her boat represents experiences during which her imagination quickly brings her thoughts to the future. This is the only imaginative variation of the four written in the past tense instead of the present. 104 often presented her interview material in large story-like concepts instead of minute experiences, which created a distance between herself and the information, similarly to the way the use of past tense reduces the immediacy of a story.

Diane On the River

Diane grew up on the island, a mainstay of her parents' boat. She had been making trips every day, to the mainland and back, since before she could remember. It was the family business. She never thought much about it; the boat was a necessity.

When she was 11, Diane and her friends discovered a river, originating from a spring several miles inland, with a gentle current that drifted out to the ocean. Her mother smiled knowingly as Diane and her friends hauled the family's old sailboat, minus the sail, out to the spring one day. They climbed in and spent the next few hours gossiping, laughing and looking around excitedly as the water nudged them along. When they finally reached the ocean, they picked up their oars and paddled along the island's shore back home. This became sort of a weekend tradition for the girls over the next few

years, and as the initial excitement wore off, the trips became a quieter, more relaxing affair. Sometimes they would talk, sometimes just lie back and think.

By the time she was 15, Diane mostly made these trips by herself, hauling the same old boat out to the spring and coasting along on the water every weekend. Some days it would rain, and she would paddle over to the riverbank, flip the boat over on the rocks and take a nap underneath until the rain died down. When she woke up, the water would be still enough that she could study her face in the reflection. There were no mirrors in her cottage home, and most of the water on the island moved too quickly for her to examine what her face looked like, how it had changed since the last storm.

For her 16th birthday, Diane's parents bought her a bright new white sail for her boat. She felt the rush as it propelled her forward, and suddenly her trips down the river felt more like a liberating thrill. She also began to attract some attention. A lot of the women who lived or worked near the river would greet her on her way by, and she would guide herself over to meet them and talk. Sometimes an older person would tell her she had a familiar face, and ask whether she's of any relation to Gloria, her mother. Over the next couple of years, Diane heard all sorts of stories from people who had met her mother as a teenager, when she used to make the same trip down the river in her own boat. "Oh, but I haven't seen her up this way for years, now," they would pause, and Diane would fill in the blanks, explaining how her mother had been back on the island for a long time, but focused on raising her daughter and maintaining the family business.

Pretty soon, Diane is going to build a boat of her own. She imagines letting the river empty her out into the ocean, and sailing away over the horizon. But she knows she'll always come back.

104: Revised Themes

After completing the Imaginative Variation and further contemplating the data, the researcher reorganized the themes into structures. The goal is to describe the music listening experience more fully by explaining why the co-researchers have the experience they do. Following is a breakdown of the themes from 104's interview, revised and organized into structures of experience. This breakdown provides the basis for the Structural Variation that follows.

- **Two Distinct Music Listening Experiences**
 - **Expression of Identity**
 - Emotional
 - Difficulty putting the experience into words
 - Especially when discussing a favorite performer
 - Enhancing emotions
 - During a movie
 - On vacation
 - During conversations with friends
 - Feeling personally connected to the music
 - Revisiting feelings from listening earlier
 - Adventurous
 - Identification with adventurous lyrics
 - Identification with stories of her mother's adventures, based on her music
 - Creative
 - Playing her favorite music on the guitar
 - Recreating it
 - Changing it
 - Imagining a scene where a song would play well
 - Thinks of having a career as a music supervisor
 - Creative characterizations of the music
 - **Reigning Back of Expressive Personality Traits**
 - Listening to slow, quiet songs
 - Paying more attention to the music than the lyrics
 - Experiencing the elements of the song coming together as a whole
 - Helps modify her mood
 - More relaxed
 - Less anxious

104: Structural Description

Throughout the interview, 104 explained and demonstrated two distinct but related experiences of listening to favorite music. The first is the expression of her identity as an adventurous, emotional and creative person. The other is a reigning back of those personality traits for 104 to take time to introspect and calmly take a break.

104 sometimes has difficulty putting her enjoyment of her favorite music into a rational description, especially when expressing how much she admires one of her favorite performers. In this case, 104 found the sound and the up-tempo beat of the music to be a gateway to a close examination of the lyrics. The subject matter of the lyrics was closely related to the way 104 envisions her future unfolding after she graduates from high school. This relation is strengthened by the fact that the song she selected is also a favorite song of her mothers, and that 104 envisions herself following a path similar to that of her mother in some ways.

Music has enhanced 104's emotions in many situations, such as during a scene in a sad movie, during a vacation with a friend, during quiet conversations with friends and the first time she drove in a car by herself. She feels a personal connection with these songs, feeling while listening that certain songs could have been written about her. 104 feels an instant connection with her favorite songs, a moment she describes as a "click." This is a moment in her listening experience where everything seems right, and falls into place in a way that makes sense to 104. Re-listening to a song like this causes that same feeling to be repeated, however it may be too subtle for her to notice, and unless the song is very special, this feeling wears off when 104 listens to the song too much. After a long period of not listening, this song can be returned to, and the same feelings revisited.

There is a creative element to 104's music listening. She thinks of playing the guitar when listening to music, and often figures out how to play the songs herself. Once learning the chords, she demonstrates mastery over a song by reproducing it, and then taking control, changing it in any way she pleases. Other times, 104 imagines a scene from a movie or from her life that might make sense appearing against that music. She feels like it would be fulfilling to have a job in the future that allows her to choose songs for movies, and create these moments for other people. Her creativity extends also to her characterizations of the music; she gives vivid and colorful descriptions of the music, which can be backed up with concrete examples of musical elements and changes.

104 also uses music listening experiences to calm herself down and restrain her emotions. In the case from this interview, she listened to a slow, quiet song, with a guitar and two voices. In this experience, she was drawn more to the chords and the melody than she was to the lyrics. While listening she appreciated how the elements of the music came together in a complementary way to form a seamless whole, which helped her to feel more relaxed and less anxious.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Major Findings

While each of the listening experiences proved to be unique to the teenager providing the information, certain commonalities ran throughout the interviews as well. Many of the experiences, both common and unique, correspond to the identity and emotion-based subtopics discussed in the review of literature. Those connections are addressed below, with an extra section included on the use of music as a way to deal with a threat. Also, connections are made to the literature on the adolescent brain, along with the passage of time in relation to adolescent music listening, and the concept of extramusical diversion during listening.

Development of identity. All participants demonstrated aspects of their values, personalities and needs through different aspects of their music listening. As 101 explored one favorite song in the past year, he made the decision that the woman described in the lyrics was making the wrong life choices by pursuing a relationship for reasons other than love, and he adjusted his listening experience to reflect his decision. He regularly uses music to enhance his sense of well-being, embodying part of Erikson's (1968) definition of identity, during his strategic sessions of putting on music and working out his troubles, or just feeling better in general.

102 listens to music with lyrics about being lazy and skipping school, but hears within it a motivational message about the work he must do to succeed. This is a reflection of the identity he has formed, an internal sense that his hard work will lead to success, and that he is capable of getting what he wants out of life if he applies the right

effort. He also appreciates certain music for being “different,” especially because it has come recommended by his friends whom he values greatly. This may be connected to another aspect of Erikson’s (1968) definition of a well-formed identity, “an inner assuredness of anticipated recognition from those who count,” in this case, his friends (p. 165). He has trouble expressing exactly what he likes about the music sometimes, maybe because the set of values surrounding his liking of this music is still developing as he listens more, and as it continues to integrate into the experiences he has with his friends. For now, he attributes his enjoyment of the music to its, “good vibes.”

103 shows a strong commitment to his favorite rock music, using it as a daily source of motivation. One author has said, “the strong passions awakened by a song provide a personal refrain around which a provisional identity might cohere” (Larson, 1995, p. 548). This quote describes 103’s morning routine of listening to his two favorite songs, which he described as an essential part of his day. Perhaps without hearing his songs in the morning, and feeling those strong emotions, he would not quite feel like himself. However, he also offers a clear sense of his self-image, as he gave his information confidently throughout the interview. This data is in line with Nuttall’s (2008a) finding that teens with strong musical commitments are especially willing and able to express their identities (p. 626).

104 identifies deeply with song lyrics that describe the experiences she wishes to have. In this way, 104 exemplifies the Larson (1995) finding that teens can “feel a range of internal states and try on alternate identities” (p. 548), during their solitary music listening. She imagines herself traveling, playing the part of the character in the song. Additionally, she described her values in a roundabout way, by initially talking about her

favorite music in terms of the music she normally avoids – the popular hip hop and dance music she hears on the radio. In some ways, she seems to see herself as ideologically removed from many of her peers at school, and she expresses this self-image through her music preferences.

Identification with peers. 102 and 103 spoke frequently about the thoughts they had about their friends while listening, and had many stories about listening to and discovering their favorite music with friends. 104 expressed these same sentiments, but sometimes seemed to downplay the importance of the interactions with peers. Still, she admitted to many occasions where her listening included her friends, including a description of a meaningful moment where she and a friend paused their conversation just to the music. Larson's (1995) finding that teens seek solidarity with peers by listening to sad songs together is reflected in 104's data, as she remembers doing just that, albeit "a few years ago." 101 also felt that his interactions with peers were less important than the listening experience he has on his own, mentioning how he would casually bring up a new favorite song to friends at school, but indicating that this was not a high-priority part of his enjoyment of the music. As 101 was the youngest participant in this study, it is possible that his identification with his peers through favorite music may increase as he moves forward into high school.

Evocation of memories or personal history and consideration of the future.

All participants experience pleasant memories from the past as they listen to their favorite music, and these memories often include the important people in their lives such as friends and family members. Having a copy of the music, then, becomes a case of the teen's storing a personal memory using digital media, a concept explored and expanded

by Ismail, Merabti, Llewellyn-Jones and Sudirman (2006). But while the Ismail et al. study explores how one could use self-generated media such as photos or videos to this end, the present study illuminates how music provides an alternate route for teens to capture and hold onto important people and events.

During listening, 102 and 104 both have thoughts about their future experiences in college, which makes sense as they are nearing the end of their high school careers and both intend to leave home for school. These two participants mentioned having a variety of day-to-day thoughts during listening. Thoughts of college and the end of high school seem to be a part of these day-to-day concerns, which is to say that 102 and 104 would probably be having thoughts of the future without the music listening experience. However, listening to music gives both participants a chance to think about and explore different ideas about that next stage of their lives and what it will be like. For 102, who is excited about this next stage, one favorite song was literally about going to college. He found the lyric, "I can change the life I lead," to be noteworthy as a part of his engagement with that song.

Identification with ideals. No participant demonstrated his alliance with rigid ideals more strongly than 103 in his rejection of the meanings of his favorite songs. Male listeners have been found often to prefer music from performers deemed credible and genuine (Nuttall, 2008a, p. 627). In this light, it is noteworthy that 103 automatically assumes that any musician he hears is likely inauthentic, and his alignment with that musician's ideals will result in disappointment in the future. This finding is counter to the Arnett (1995) study that says music helps adolescents discover what is meaningful in life (p. 526). Still, 103's listening habits resemble the concept of the idealistic values of

adolescent music fans in many ways. He is unconcerned about whether a favorite band's music contains satanic themes, because as predicted by Erikson (1963b), the band's "artistic veracity" (p. 13), is more important to him than the band's standing with adult society. Besides, he knows that the band's message will not have an impact on him in any event.

Autonomy from parental figures. This aspect of adolescence seems to appear more incidentally than intentionally among these participants. Some adults might have anticipated that the participants would report playing their obnoxious music as loudly as possible to earn an unfavorable reaction from their parents. The literature reflects this view as well, such as when Larson (1995) discusses how teens assert their existences to their parents through their loud music (p. 542). However, this phenomenon was not mentioned by any of the participants. In fact, 104 used a favorite song to help her identify better with her mother, and imagine herself following the same sort of life path that her mother once followed. While this fantasy includes moving away from her parents' house and her home state, she says that this is because of the opportunities that other places afford, which her current situation cannot, and that she plans to return someday. 103 was the only other participant to mention a parent in the interview, as his mother was part of his memory about buying a favorite CD. This data actually reflects findings in the literature, namely the study by Nuttall (2008a) that suggests that 103, a member of a single-parent household, might use music to try to relate to his mother, or otherwise include her in the experience. None of the participants expressed a negative sentiment toward a parent during the interview, although for 101 and 102, the lack of a parental association in the music listening could represent their wish for autonomy from

their parents, just not the overt struggle that might accompany it. As pointed out by Nuttall (2008b), this result might have been influenced by the fact that the participants were talking with an adult, and not a peer.

Coping with stress. 101 and 104 expressed that they purposefully use music to help themselves feel better when feeling anxious or sad. If the range of stressful emotions is expanded to encompass boredom and lack of motivation, 102 and 103 can be included as well, as they both talk about using music to increase their energy and to help themselves feel more able and excited to complete the work they need to do that day.

Problem-focused coping. Problem-Focused Coping is a method described by Schwartz and Fouts (2003) whereby teens use music to seek “validation for what they think and feel about themselves, others, and society, it assures them that they are not emotionally alone” (p. 206). Participants 101 and 104 both use music for this style of coping. 101 spoke about using music to help him work through a problem and gain better perspective about a science test on which he had done poorly. For 104, the idea of emotional loneliness seems particularly relevant. As pointed out earlier, 104 seems to be ideologically removed from her peers at school, a status she describes by emphasizing her distaste for popular music. Under certain circumstances, it seems reasonable that this could cause 104 to feel removed from the crowd, and indeed, emotionally alone. However, by identifying so strongly with a favorite lyricist, and with such personal connections to other songs, 104 has found a way to confront this problem using her favorite music. By feeling connected to songs, and possibly the people who created them, 104 staves off this loneliness during music listening.

Emotion-focused coping. Schwartz and Fouts (2003) find that some music “can serve a cathartic or calming effect, an effect that relieves unhappiness, anger, or anxiety” (p. 206) for teen listeners. All the participants in this study could be described as using music to improve their mood. 101 feels less active than while problem-focused coping when he puts on slow music and, “I just kinda lie there and see if I can, you know, make myself feel better, you know, just by not doing anything.” 102 listens to music in the morning that can keep his spirits high throughout a day at school. 103 feels “happy and bright,” while listening, largely because of how the elements of the music come together in a pleasurable way. And 104 has a collection of songs she uses to feel relaxed and calm. She made a specific mention as well that music is helpful to her when she is feeling anxious.

Avoidance/disengagement coping. Avoidance/disengagement coping, as described by Schwartz and Fouts (2003), takes place when a teen uses music for “escaping or avoiding uncomfortable and unwanted moods and feelings” (p. 206) by distracting oneself with the stimulation of the music. None of the participants expressed using this coping style explicitly. With 103’s preference for chaotic music played extremely loudly into his headphones, one can imagine his having an experience similar to that of Nuttall’s (2008b) participant who used music, “to escape: ‘I can turn the music up loud and it blocks out everything else’ ” (p. 107). 103 listens to music in a way that blocks out all other sound, and even distorts his visual surroundings by providing such a strong visceral experience of movement for him. However, 103 provided so many other reasons for his enjoyment of the music, it would be a mistake to assume that he uses music in this way, as he never explicitly said so.

Music as a way to deal with a threat. All four participants report using music in what could be interpreted as a defensive way. The negative affects listed above, such as anger or anxiety, pose a type of threat to the listener, who uses the music to avert this threat. Music combats the threat by offering many psychological uses to the listener, which are explored here.

Music can be used as a container for difficult emotions. In Bion's (1962) theory of the container and the contained, the infant projects difficult emotions so that they can be absorbed and interpreted by the mother, who can deal with them accordingly, transforming the out-of-control emotion into something reasonable. For the adolescent, music plays this role, offering its structure to the teen, who can use that structure in an organizational way. Bonde (2007) explains how this happens by way of an intricate cross-mapping that can help the teen organize such relatively difficult and mysterious concepts as life and love, using the familiar realm of music as a metaphor to help interpret the confusing information (p. 64).

One way this happens is with sublimation. Sublimation is the diversion of human drives away from sexuality and aggression, and toward something else deemed more socially acceptable (Moore & Fine, 1990, pp. 187-188). Anna Freud explains how a boy who loves watching football on television, "fulfills some of his interests and at the same time guards against injury," a compromise that could be considered sublimation (Sandler & Freud, 1985, p. 217). It is easy to see how the participants in this study fit those same criteria when listening to their favorite music. 103 provides a clear example of this when using the music to create musical ideas of his own, expelling his physical energy, but in an organized way, in time with the music. 101 pores intellectual energy into the music,

analyzing the pieces of it. Like the boy watching football, 101 fulfills his interests by studying the parts of the music, and guards against injury by putting those parts together in a way that can rescue him from a negative affect. His focus on the piano and the tempo in one song, for example, was powerful enough to overcome the “sad” nature of the lyrics, and any threatening affect that those lyrics may represent.

Erikson (1968) wrote that, “a child has many opportunities to identify himself, more or less experimentally, with real or fictitious people of either sex and with habits, traits, occupations and ideas” (p. 53). During identification, these “various attitudes, functions, and values of the other are integrated into a cohesive effective identity and become fully functional parts of the self” (p. 103), according to Moore and Fine (1990). The teens in this study were all able to identify with something in the music, whether it was with the lyrics, the performer, other musical elements, or a combination of the three, thereby allowing the parts of the music to become parts of themselves. 103 identifies strongly with the bass of the music. As Meyer (1956) explains, musical tones are typically related to non-musical areas of experience (as reflected in many of the participants’ non-concrete responses throughout the current study), and lower tones, such as the deep bass frequencies preferred by 103, are generally associated with large objects (p. 261). It is possible then, that 103 enjoys hearing loud bass in his music because it allows him to identify with its large perceived size – an attribute that would make him more powerful in the face of a threat. 101 was especially able to identify with certain instruments in the music, following those instruments like lead characters in a story – a story about himself, an idea supported by the fact that 101 thinks of reproducing the sounds he hears on his own piano or his own guitar. 104 thinks of playing along as well,

and identifies strongly with the lyrics in a favorite song, as she pictures herself having the same type of adventures as the song's protagonist. And 102 especially identifies with the lyric, "I can change the life I lead," a line that points both to the exciting life changes he anticipates and also his ability to be in control over those changes. In all these cases, the participants use their identifications with the music in a healthy way, in order to help provide a strong sense of oneself that can handily defeat the challenges that one faces in the present and in the future.

Expression of affect otherwise difficult to express. This was a phenomenon demonstrated both by 103 and 104, both of whom were so moved by their music that they sometimes had trouble putting their experiences into words. While it was ultimately possible to gather plenty of data from the interview of 104, she spent a great deal of time expressing how strongly she felt about the performer of a favorite song. "Feel like I'm just, I'm not even tal- eh, that's like, yeah. She's just so good." 104 said. It is possible that the "clicking" that 104 describes when hearing her favorite music is connected with the process of the music's expressing something that she feels, but has been unable to put into words herself. 103 had a similar moment when talking about the feeling of listening to his favorite music extremely loudly through headphones, saying, "And I just felt like, like I could just, ah..."

This concept is also demonstrated through the characterization of each participant's music as a reflection of that participant's own feelings. When a teen gives colorful descriptions of the music, such as that it is "picking up" or "calm" or "bouncing off," these often seem like a reflection of the listener's own strong reactions. The participants were often able to put their own feelings into words when asked directly, but

they appeared more comfortable talking about the feelings as aspects of the music instead of themselves. This may have been a matter of adolescent insecurity, discomfort brought about because of the normal cultural limitations of expressing strong feelings to a stranger, or something else.

Recreation of intense affective states. Participant 104 reports listening to sad music with friends experiencing stress or upset about boys, an activity illustrated in the literature by Larson (1995). 103 demonstrated a focused, almost mean-looking expression while hearing one favorite song during the interview. He reports listening to that song, which he describes as “heavy” and “deep,” every morning before school. Larson suggests that the chaotic music might bring about strong emotions that help hold together his sense of identity for that day. While 102 also listens to favorite music in the morning, his experience seems to be different; He gains a feeling of motivation from the lyrics and lets the feel of the song keep him in a good mood throughout the day, rather than stirring such powerful feelings.

The role of the adolescent brain in music listening. The intense emotional reactions by 103 and 104 are typical to the adolescent population, given the changes happening in the brain at this stage of development (Rice and Dolgin, 2005; Steinberg, 2005). As noted by Steinberg, the idea of risk and reward comes into play as well. An adult might shudder at 103’s style of listening to his headphones as loudly as possible, because 103 makes that decision on the basis of his strong emotions. These emotions are stimulated by a powerful emotional center in his brain, the amygdala, which is not yet fully monitored by the still-developing frontal lobe (Rice and Dolgin, 2005, p. 152). Because of this, 103 ignores the ramifications this listening habit may have on his hearing

ability later in life. In other words, he is taking a risk without considering whether the instant reward will balance out the hearing deficits he may experience later on, because his adolescent brain encourages him so strongly to take the risk. Hooper et al (2004) show in their study that risk and reward calculations will continue to improve for 103 through his early twenties.

104's emotions play a significant role in her experience as well. When she listens to lyrics about traveling and having exciting adventures, her frontal lobe is not yet allowing her to consider whether these plans are reasonable or practical. Some of this emotional experience is a result of the music, and part is happening because of 104's personality, but her amygdala and its influence over her thoughts in comparison to her frontal lobe is almost certainly playing a role as well. According to the literature, her frontal lobe will continue to develop and exert more power as many of the excitatory synapses of the amygdala are eliminated (Rice and Dolgin, 2005, p. 153). However, 104 could be further along in this process than 103, as demonstrated by her current distaste for stimulating rap music. Regarding this music she says, "there's so many words being thrown out at you, and so many beats," that the listening experience is unpleasant. If 104 had more synapses for processing excitatory responses, she might not feel this way.

The passage of time. The passage of time is not a phenomenon mentioned in the literature review. However, multiple subjects reported that as more elements were added to a piece of music, and the volume increased, they felt the music increasing in tempo, despite the actual number of beats per minute remaining the same. This change can likely be attributed to the way these listeners perceive the passage of time, and how it changes when they experience the changes caused within them by the music.

Frasier (1975) notes that musical experiences extending back to instances of early ritual dancing left the participants, “in an induced state of timeless ecstasy which overcame the uncertainty of the present and filled the participants with a sense of omnipotence about the future” (p. 410). The music had a sort of magical quality, felt through its perceived effects on the flow of time, and the way the participants regarded the present and the future.

This information sheds a new light on the experiences of 101 and 102, who both experienced changes in the flow of time during the music listening. Both participants felt the speed of the music increasing, and simultaneously expressed positive changes in mood. Much like their ancient ancestors, then, 101 and 102 both used music in these instances to escape the present moment and begin to feel a sense of power over the future. It’s likely they both felt that while the present may be uncertain or dull, the future holds the promise that the listener will be in control, and that everything will be okay. For 101, this means he can be lifted out of a bad mood and feel encouraged to move on. For 102, his music makes him feel excited about future plans for going away to college, or for the upcoming weekend, both events in the future. This phenomenon could also help explain why 102 and 103 like to listen to music before school. It may provide a sense of mastery over the near future that could ease any uncertainty about what the day will hold.

Extramusical diversion. In one instance during the interviews there was a clear example of a co-researcher describing a case of an extramusical diversion. This is caused by what Meyer (1956) calls image processes, occurring in the mind of the listener, which lead from one to another without being related to the music. When 103 said in the

interview, “I daydream really easy. About like, skateboarding to this song...like three songs later I’ll realize I was daydreaming the whole time, not listening to the song,” he was describing a process which Meyer explains thusly:

That is, one image may follow another, not because of the associations which obtain between the images and the progress of the music, but because of the associations in the mind of the listener between the images themselves...The real stimulus is not the progressive unfolding of the musical structure, but the subjective content of the listener’s mind. (pp. 257-258)

As opposed to a scenario where a sequence of musical events corresponds to a succession of images in 103’s mind, the music seems in this case to have triggered an initial response, a mental image of himself skateboarding. Then, this image itself triggered further mental imagery for 103, independently of the music, to the extent that 103 forgot he was listening to music at all. Meyer notes that music, by its very nature, poses “tremendous temptations toward extramusical diversion” (p. 257).

Clinical Applications

A major reason for this study was to increase the ability of a clinician to connect with teenage patients through the use of music. As described in the section above, the adolescent music listening experience can be intimately connected with the teen’s identity and emotions, along with their values and needs.

It is also important for a clinician to know that the descriptions about one’s music can often serve as descriptions of oneself. The participants in the study comfortably described their music as uplifting, relaxing, upbeat, and having properties of motion, which generally turned out to describe the participants themselves during the listening. While these were all positive emotions for the teens, a conversation about favorite music

might be an alternate path to a tender emotional area for a teen, and could be a way to discuss areas of the teen's experience and he/she is uncomfortable discussing so directly. A teenager who says, "this music is sad," might actually be saying, "I am sad."

Some teens, including at least two from this study (101 and 104), use music as a coping mechanism against sadness or anxiety. Without saying it outright, both of these participants expressed their needs – in this case the need to feel happier, or the need to feel less anxious. This researcher has also spoken with a teen client in a hospital setting who described how hearing his favorite music relieved his extreme anger; he felt his fists loosen and his body go limp during an incident when he was otherwise ready to attack somebody. Knowing that teens use music to deal with their difficult emotions, it could be revealing to a clinician to find out how a teenager uses music on his/her own, as a way of determining what some of the patient's needs are.

Further, a teen in a treatment setting may have ended up there as a result of not knowing how to deal with those difficult emotions. In this case, the clinician could provide education to the teens about different styles of using music for coping with anxiety after leaving treatment. This might include a discussion about the emotional reactions that a teen has from different songs, talking about the best kind of songs to use in difficult situations, and possibly to determine if any music should be avoided during difficult times because of the dangerous emotions that might be triggered, especially for a mentally unstable patient.

As music listening triggers memories of important people in the participants' lives, a discussion of the teen client's favorite music could lead to a discussion about those important people, especially friends and siblings, as well. This could be a way for

the teen to identify positive supports in his/her life and consider that he/she is not alone in the world, a feeling reinforced by the benefits of problem-focused coping. On the other hand, if a certain friend or group of friends is directly involved with a teen's behavior problem, the music associated with those friends might be considered a way to contain the idea of those people, as with the participant 102, who put distance between himself and a song that reminded him of an ex-girlfriend. For a teen struggling with difficult feelings, a discussion about favorite music could also be a way for the teen to express authentic feelings about the music, a safe way to get used to the idea of experiencing authentic feelings toward other people and one's self.

Martin et al. (2006) found that showing a high level of respect for a teen client is an effective way of establishing a therapeutic alliance. One way this could be achieved might be through a conversation about the teen's values, which can come out in conversations about the teen's favorite music. While it might be confusingly abstract to approach an adolescent client with a question so direct as, "what are your values," teens seem to feel more at ease discussing how they feel about their favorite song, how that song reflects them and what their core beliefs are. After gaining knowledge of these values, the clinician can show respect for the client by acknowledging them, and strengthen the alliance moving forward.

Because of all the ways noted above that a teenager can express an identity and emotions through music, it should be clear that a clinician selecting favorite music of the adolescent client can provide advantages over presenting the client with music that is new or unfamiliar. These advantages include pathways to discussions about the values, needs, personality, support network, and difficult emotions of the client. As the listening

experiences of all the participants in this study were substantially different from one another, most will probably also differ from the therapist's as well.

Furthermore, it may be revealed through future research that teenagers suffering from similar clinical conditions may have similar music listening experiences, and that this information can be exploited by a clinician running a session with new teenaged clients. This idea is explored in greater depth in the section of this chapter titled, *Implications For Future Research*.

Finally, communication researcher James Lull (1987) wrote in a section on adolescent music listeners:

Perhaps the least productive argument that can take place in the discussion of the impact of popular music is that which attempts to assess the relative power of the lyrics versus the beat or other attributes of music. It is clear that both the lyrics and beat have a profound impact, and that they are not separate factors in the first place. (p. 146)

This statement is *not* reflected in the results of this study. While the participants all enjoyed the melodic and rhythmic elements of their favorite music, they had dramatically different reactions to the lyrics, ranging from inspiration to ignorance to outright distrust. Among the co-researchers for this study, when the lyrics were the focus, the music seemed to enhance their effect, as with 102's experience. However, when certain instruments or the entire sound of the song was the focus, the lyrics often played an inconsequential role for the teen listener. Despite Lull's claim, the distinction between the importance of the lyrics and the beat could actually be a very important one for a music therapy clinician to make, in order to avoid designing music therapy activities that fail to resonate with teen clients.

Limitations

There are several limitations to be considered in this Master's level study. This is a phenomenological study, so the results are not generalizable to the greater population of adolescents. The common threads running through multiple co-researcher experiences are notable for their recurrence within the context of this thesis, but should not be considered applicable to all teens.

For a clinician gathering information about music therapy, this study is only concerned with listening to favorite music. It does not consider how the experience would change if the participant was singing or playing a part of a favorite song with a clinician or a group, rather than just listening to it.

For one participant, 102, listening to complete songs as a part of the data collection was an unusual activity. The study was designed to simulate the regular listening habits of normal adolescents, but part of this regular experience was missed, as 102 typically listens to a short favorite section of a song instead of the entire thing. He was able to speak about this listening style, but not about how the experience was different when listening to partial songs.

For each participant, this interview was a one-time snapshot of the music listening experience at a certain time of life. Adolescence is a stage of human development where a person may constantly be in flux. It was not possible to find out how much a person's music listening experience changed over the course of the adolescent stage, only what it was like at the precise time of the interview. There were occasions during data collection where a change over time was discussed, like 103's talking about how he once was concerned with knowing all the words to his favorite song, but not anymore, but the

changes in music listening that happen over the course of adolescence for this co-researcher group remains largely undocumented.

102 is the only co-researcher for this study who does not play an instrument himself. While the results of this phenomenological study are the four distinct experiences, the sample was meant to be normal adolescents, not adolescent musicians. While this study reveals the preferred music listening experiences of each participant, the ratio of musicians to non-musicians in this study may have led to misleading results, were the reader to conclude (mistakenly) that the results are generalizable to teenagers in general.

Experience of the Researcher

Having never conducted a phenomenological interview before this study, I prepared myself as much as possible ahead of time by consulting the text, *Learning From Strangers*, by Weiss (1994). I twice read the section on phenomenological interviewing, but I still felt anxious, especially for the first interview, which was with 101. After that interview, I remember feeling unsure about whether I had gotten the right data. After all, there are so many conversations that can come out of a person's favorite music, how was I even supposed to know what counts as a part of the music listening experience? And at what point does an elaboration on a memory caused by the music stray from the actual experience?

During the data analysis for 102, I was faced with some interesting challenges that I did not face with the data from other respondents. While this participant was perfectly cooperative, he demonstrated a personality, a set of interests, and a listening style that

was markedly different from my own, making it more difficult for me to understand and to capture the essence of the experience. With each imaginative variation, I aimed to place the co-researcher into a context that represented his/her most fully realized experience of music listening. For 102, this required a different route of thought than for the other three co-researchers, with whom I felt a better sense of understanding. It was only after I completed all the data analysis for 102 that I realized that in addition to the differences pointed out above, 102 was the only participant who did not play any music during the interview that I personally enjoyed, and that this may have enlarged the rift I perceived between myself and 102.

As the researcher, I had to make sure not to create a description of 102 with the same mindset that one might use to form incorrect pre-judgments about a complete stranger. I needed to avoid putting myself at the center of the experience, and building the imaginative variation upon my stereotypical idea of “other.” In order to see the character of the imaginative variation as a multi-dimensional person, I manufactured some biographical differences about which I hold neither positive nor negative judgments (that he started an Internet company, for example). With this new background, the character seemed to develop separately from, rather than in comparison to, myself, and was immersed in an experience that resembles the essence of the music listening experience as rich as the one described to me by 102, and as rich as those of the other participants.

I felt a sense of panic when I realized that in the imaginative variation for 103, I had the character driving the same car that I used to drive (I have since changed this aspect of the imaginative variation). I became concerned that while 102’s imaginative

variation risked containing too strong a sense of other, 103's might actually contain too much of myself. But after reviewing the rest of the imaginative variation, I was again convinced that it was based on 103's experience and not mine. 103's interview provided so much data, I feel I gained a better understanding of his experience than the others, which may have helped me identify better with his experience than the others. Alternately, the inclusion of my car may have been a coincidence.

I interviewed participant 104 shortly after she woke up, following her junior prom the night before. She was cooperative and friendly but she seemed groggy, and may not have been able to bring her thoughts together as clearly as she might have on another day. Additionally, she presented her data differently than the other participants. While the three males answered questions more or less directly, 104 spoke in generalities, often talking about the way "people" behave, and about "music" in general the way she might talk about it with a friend. Initially, this was a cause for concern because I mistook her statements for avoidance of discussing the first-person experience. However, once I got to the data analysis stage, I realized that she actually provided a lot of data about her experience, albeit in a less literal way than the other participants. 104's general way of providing descriptions could have been a way of her recognizing her place in the larger world, which was also a theme of her music listening experience.

As mentioned in the results section, it was unclear in some cases whether 104 was describing her listening experience, or whether some of her statements originated from the emotional reactions she had from discussing the music with another person. This ambiguous portion of the interview is as follows:

Interviewer: When you listen to the music, do you think about Joni Mitchell?

104: Um, yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah?

104: Yeah, um, hmm. I guess so, I mean, that too, she's like, as, like as a musician too, like, I admire her because like she's so, she's such an iconic and strong individual.

Interviewer: Hmm

104: Um, she writes all her own songs, and um, and also when I like, when I like how the song sounds, like I listen to the words more...

104's uncertainty here may illustrate that she has strong emotions while listening, and that she recognizes from a cognitive perspective outside of the music listening experience that Joni Mitchell's unique talent is responsible for the powerful effect the music has on her. Unfortunately, this is only a guess, as 104 did not respond to an e-mail in which I offered her the option of making comments on the Textural and Structural Descriptions.

Though I did not realize this as I was writing them, the Imaginative Variations took the form of the interviews themselves, along with containing the intentional metaphors for the themes from the data. For 101, this meant including thoughtful explanations in a description about piecing together elements (of the music) to build a source of light (a metaphor for feeling better and using the music to sustain himself). For 102, this meant a succinct description, in the style of the participant's own brief answers. For 103, the imaginative variation included extensive detail and a lot of dimension to the descriptions, as 103 gave long, multi-faceted answers with emotional and detailed explanations. 104 seemed less comfortable using concrete statements in her interview, often presenting the information as though it were part of a big, universal story. As a result, her Imaginative Variation was written almost entirely in the past tense, and more like a fable than a present-tense description with the immediacy of the others. So while I intended to encapsulate the listening experience of each teen, my own experience of

conducting the interview incidentally framed each variation by way of its form, just as it framed the information itself in my real experience. However, the form of the Imaginative Variations played no role in the Structural Descriptions that followed.

Implications for Future Research

The noteworthy differences uncovered between the music listening experiences of this study's participants begs the question of whether there could be a way to organize the differences among adolescent music listeners. Teen listeners might fall into classifiable categories or types according to their music listening styles, the same way an adult can take a personality test. Could this study be a first step in identifying archetypes of teenage music listeners?

It is highly improbable that each co-researcher in this study represents a single, exclusive listening type. If all teen music listeners fit into the categories defined by the four co-researchers in the study, those definitions might look like this:

- 101: Intellectual listener
 - Listens to music in an *atomistic* way, picking apart the elements of the music and putting them together in a way that will suit his needs. Meyer (1956) defines atomism as a way of explaining and understanding “music as a succession of separable and discrete sounds” (p. 5).
- 102: Social Listener
 - Listens to music as a way of being connected with the outside world, often for its associations with other people
- 103: Sensation Listener

- Listens to music as a spectacle, a source of amazement, which facilitates feelings of movement
- 104: Self-Exploration Listener
 - Listens to music as an adventure to explore the ambitious part of her personality, or a quiet place to take stock of herself and her emotions

While these classifications are convenient, however, they leave out much of the detail of the listening experience. If they were expanded to include more detail, significant crossover would be revealed between the listening types. In fact, this set of classifications ignores the similarities that exist between some but not all of the co-researchers, so while it is accurate, it seems fairly weak so far.

Perhaps a better way to classify adolescent music listeners would be to develop a set of scales similar to the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers & McCaulley, 1985). Each scale would represent an aspect of the music listening experience that exists in different amounts for different listeners, and by considering all of one's ratings on the scale, one's listening type would be defined. Based on the differences between the four participants in this study, possible scales might include:

- The extent to which a teenager listens to music as a whole versus atomistically
- The importance a teen places on lyrics and their meanings
- The degree to which physical motion of the body plays a role
- How much the music is appreciated in and of itself as well as for its associations

- Whether the listener imagines visual images that could accompany the music

By assigning placements on a variety of scales in this way, listening types could eventually emerge that resemble the archetypes proposed above for the four participants in the study. This would allow for definable listening types to exist, like “Intellectual Listener” and “Social Listener”, despite these different kinds of listeners sharing some similar characteristics of the experience.

For a future study, a researcher might administer a survey to all the students in an entire high school, with questions concerning how they listen to their favorite music, along with questions to determine the personality type and socioeconomic standing of the respondents. In this way, connections could begin to emerge between musical and non-musical characteristics of the students. Respondents who exemplify certain traits of music listening could be analyzed in groups to determine whether people who listen in the same way have other similarities as well. Also, respondents who represent distinct types of music listening could be approached for open-ended, exploratory interviews much like the ones conducted for this thesis.

It is possible that the same factors, such as socioeconomic background, history of trauma, personality type, etc., that increase the possibility of a teenager’s winding up in a detention center or having to seek psychiatric treatment, also increase the teen’s likelihood of having a certain type of music listening experience. If such connections are uncovered, a clinician working with one of these populations could apply this knowledge toward creating experiences that are more relevant for the clients by using music in a way that is most likely to trigger the desired response. Research in this area would augment

the findings of a study by Delsing, Bogt, Engels, and Meeus, (2008), which found that preferences for certain *types of music* are consistently related to personality traits in adolescents. By combining the proposed future study with the findings from the Delsing et al. study, a teen's *preferred genre of music* could prove for clinicians not only to be an indicator of what genre of music to bring to a session, but also how the teen is likely to experience the music that is played in the session. Ultimately, the result would be a stronger therapeutic alliance and more effective music therapy treatment for adolescent clients.

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This phenomenological research study found that the lived experience of an adolescent listening to favorite music varies widely depending on the person, and sometimes the song as well. Each teen co-researcher in the study engaged in his or her favorite music in ways that were unique among the participants. The different music listening experiences reflected the differences of their various personalities, values, and needs. In some cases, the listeners exerted control over the music, actually to change it in ways that met their individual needs. A key difference in the listening experience was the way the teens responded to the lyrics in their favorite music. Sometimes the meaning of the lyrics was an important part of the experience, but in other cases lyrics were ignored or even distrusted.

As expected, there were also similarities between how the teens experienced their favorite music, most of which are reflected in the literature on the developmental stage of adolescence. Perhaps the most striking of these similarities is the tendency among all participants to recall memories with important other people, especially friends and siblings, along with the emotions that were going on during these past events. All participants also described their music using the same language they might use to describe themselves, in terms of the positive moods they achieve while listening. All the participants used music to regulate their moods, whether to cope with anxiety or to increase motivation for the day ahead.

All these differences and similarities among participants have implications for clinicians using recorded music to work with teenaged patients. By better understanding

the adolescent music listening experience, a music therapist will have additional knowledge that that be helpful in designing effective sessions for this hard-to-reach population. With further research, it might be possible to gather even more knowledge about types of music listeners, leading to information about probable aspects of the music listening experience for certain groups of teenagers, resulting in better music therapy treatment and stronger therapeutic alliances between therapists and their adolescent clients.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Flyer

Drexel University Recruiting Volunteers for a Research Study

Research Title

The Lived Experience of the Adolescent Listening to Preferred Music

Research Objectives

Music therapists and other health professionals interested in employing music in their practices may benefit from knowing more about how their adolescent clients enjoy their favorite music. Yet, little is known about what happens when an adolescent listens to his/her favorite music in a normal setting, like at home. The purpose of this one-year study is to begin finding out about the thoughts, memories and feelings an adolescent has while listening to his/her favorite music. Parents of the participants will personally decide if their child meets the inclusion and exclusion criteria before volunteering for the study.

Each subject will participate in one interview, which will take 45-65 minutes. The researcher will sit with each participant as he/she listens to two or three selections of favorite music in the place at their home where he/she most often listens. The researcher will ask about any reactions the teenager has while listening to the music.

Information for Research Subjects Eligibility

Inclusion criteria: Your child can participate in this study if he/she is 13-17 years of age and regularly listens to music. He/she must be able to express him/herself clearly and be willing to share personal feelings, thoughts, and real-time experiences with the investigator in his/her own home.

Exclusion criteria: Your child may not participate in the study if he/she has a mental disorder or is not able to converse about music listening experiences in the English language. Please do not volunteer if you feel your child may not fit these criteria, as anxiety may arise while sharing personal thoughts and feelings with the researcher. The researcher will not ask personal health information, so you must make a personal decision about whether your child fits the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

If you feel your child meets the above criteria, and he/she would like to participate in the study, please contact us using the contact information provided below. The participants will be the first five (5) people who meet the criteria and who agree to participate in the study, regardless of race, age or gender.

Person to contact for further information

If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact

Paul Nolan and Mike Mahoney

(215)-762-6927

Research will be conducted at the home of the participant.

This research is conducted by a researcher who is a member of Drexel University.

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

DREXEL UNIVERSITY PERMISSION TO TAKE PART IN A RESEARCH STUDY

1. **PARENT'S NAME:** _____
CHILD'S NAME: _____
2. **TITLE OF RESEARCH:** **The Lived Experience of the Adolescent Listening To Preferred Music**
3. **INVESTIGATOR'S NAME:** **Paul Nolan, M.C.A.T., MT-BC, LPC, Principal Investigator; Mike Mahoney, Co-Investigator**
4. **RESEARCH ENTITY:** **Drexel University**
5. **CONSENTING FOR THE RESEARCH STUDY:** This is a long and an important document. If you sign it, you will be authorizing Drexel University and its researchers to perform research studies on your child. You should take your time and carefully read it. You can also take a copy of this consent form to discuss it with your family member, attorney or any one else you would like before you sign it. Do not sign it unless you are comfortable with your child's participation in this study.
6. **PURPOSE OF RESEARCH:** Your child is being asked to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to find out about the lived experience (the thoughts, memories and emotions) of an adolescent listening to his/her favorite music. This research study is being performed by a graduate student as partial fulfillment of a master's degree in music therapy.

Your child is being asked to participate in this study because he/she meets the inclusion criteria, which is that he/she is 13-17 years old, is from the general population, regularly listens to music and does not have a mental disorder. Subjects for this research study will not be included or excluded based on their gender or ethnicity.

Approximately five (5) people will be recruited for this study. You or your child may withdraw from the study at any point.

7. PROCEDURES AND DURATION: You understand that, as a result of participating in this study, your child will experience the following:

- He/she will participate in one interview that will include listening to music selections of his/her choice and describing the listening experience both during and after the music. This may involve talking about physical sensations, thoughts, feelings, memories, or spiritual responses. The questions asked may include, “how does the music make you feel,” and “does this music change your mood.”
- The interview will last approximately 40-60 minutes. Your child will meet with the researcher at the child’s home, and conduct the majority of the interview in the place where the child most regularly listens to music. Your child will be audio-taped for transcription and data analysis in order to accurately collect data.
- Your child will be required to provide 2-3 songs of his/her choice, which are designated by the child as “favorite songs.”
- The purpose of the study will be explained to your child at the beginning of the interview. Your child will be given an assent form to read and sign, which will summarize the information provided in this consent form, including the option to cease participation in the study at any time.
- The researcher will review the consent form with you and you will be asked to sign them, if you agree of your own free will, to allow your child to participate in the study.
- After the researcher collects the consent form and you have confirmed your child’s participation in this study, your child will be asked to describe him or herself briefly, and to talk a little bit about his/her favorite music. Your child will then be asked to listen to the music he/she has selected in the place where he/she most often listens. During and after listening to the music, your child will be asked to give a description of the listening experience. The child will repeat this process one or two times, depending on his/her preference, for a total of two or three songs listened-to during the interview. After listening to all selected music, your child will be invited to share any new insights about his/her experience of listening to preferred music
- After completion of the interview, the audio recorder will be turned off and the researcher will debrief you and your child. You both will be given an opportunity at this time to express questions and/or concerns as a result of your child’s participation in the study.

- 8. RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS/CONSTRAINTS:** There is a risk that speaking with the researcher may cause some discomfort for your child. This interview will explore a music listening experience and may include the expression of private or personal thoughts and feelings. The first portion of this interview will be conducted in a neutral place in the home so that this possible discomfort may be reduced. If at any point you or your child is uncomfortable with the interview, you or your child may choose to discontinue your child's participation in this study.
- 9. UNFORESEEN RISKS:** Participation in the study may involve unforeseen risks. If unforeseen risks are seen, they will be reported to the Office of Regulatory Research Compliance.
- 10. BENEFITS:** There may be no direct benefits from participating in this study. However, based upon the results of this study, music therapists will have a better understanding of the responses that adolescents have when listening to favorite music.
- 11. ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES:** The alternative is for your child not to participate in this study.
- 12. REASONS FOR REMOVAL FROM STUDY:** Your child's participation may be stopped before the end of this study for any of the following reasons:

 - a) If you or your child decide to discontinue participation.
 - b) If all or part of this study is discontinued for any reason by the university or investigators.
 - c) If your child fails to adhere to requirements for participation established by the researcher.
- 13. VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION:** Participation in this study is voluntary, and you or your child can refuse to be in the study or stop at any time. There will be no negative consequences if you or your child decides not to participate or to stop.
- 14. RESPONSIBILITY FOR COST:** You will not be responsible for any costs relating to the study. Although your child will be asked to provide CDs or digital files of preferred music, we ask that he/she uses music already in his/her possession. The music will be played over the device the child normally uses to listen to music. Speakers will be provided if necessary.

- 15. IN CASE OF INJURY:** If you have any questions or believe that your child has been injured in any way by being in this research study, you should contact Paul Nolan at (215) 762-6927. However, neither the investigator nor Drexel University will make payment for injury, illness, or other loss resulting from your child's being in this research project. If your child is injured by this research activity, medical care including hospitalization is available, but may result in costs to you or your insurance company because the University does not agree to pay for such costs. If your child is injured or has an adverse reaction, you should also contact the Office of Regulatory Research Compliance at 215-255-7857.
- 16. CONFIDENTIALITY:** In any publication or presentation of research results, your child's identity will be kept confidential, but there is a possibility that records which identify your child may be inspected by authorized individuals, the institutional review board (IRBs), or employees conducting peer review activities. You consent to such inspections and to the copying of excerpts of your child's records, if required by any of these representatives. Audio recordings will be transcribed by the researcher and then destroyed, by erasing, cutting, and discarding the tapes seven (7) years after the subject's 18th birthday following the conclusion of the study. Until that time, the audio recordings will be held in a locked cabinet in the office of the Hahnemann Creative Arts in Therapy program. Any reference to your child will be conducted by means of an assigned identification number. To insure confidentiality, the list on which this number is identified with your child's name will be destroyed by shredding the document and discarding the list following the conclusion of the study.
- 17. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:** If you wish further information regarding your child's rights as a research subject or if you have problems with a research related injury, or medical problems, please contact the Institution's Office of Research Compliance by telephoning 215-255-7857.

18. PERMISSION:

- I have been informed of the reasons for this study.
- I have had the study explained to me.
- I have had all of my questions answered.
- I have carefully read this permission form, have initialed each page, and have received a signed copy.
- I give permission voluntarily.

 Legally Authorized Representative

 Date

 Investigator

 Date

Individuals Authorized to Obtain Permission:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Day Phone #</u>	<u>24hr. Phone #</u>
Paul Nolan	Principal Investigator	215-762-6927	215-762-6927
Mike Mahoney	Co-investigator	215-762-6927	215-762-6927

Appendix C: Assent Form

Subject Initials -----

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Drexel University

ASSENT FORM FOR CHILDREN/MINORS IN A RESEARCH STUDY

You are being asked to participate in a research study. The researcher, Michael Mahoney, is going to listen to some of your favorite music with you and ask questions about what your listening experience is like, plus a few general background questions about yourself and the music. This study is being done to learn about what it is like for adolescents to listen to their favorite music.

The Principal Investigator (Paul Nolan) and the Co-Investigator (Michael Mahoney) will know about your participation in this study, along with your parent. It is possible that some Drexel University employees may see your name connected with your information. This includes the Drexel University Institutional Review Board, the group in charge of maintaining high standards for responsible research by the university. However, your name will not be made public in the final published version of the study.

Child's Assent: I have been told about the study and know why it is being done and what to do. I also know that I do not have to do it if I do not want to. If I have questions, I can ask Michael Mahoney. I can stop at any time.

My parents/guardians know that I am being asked to be in this study.

Child's Signature

Date

List of Individuals Authorized to Obtain Assent

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Day Phone #</u>	<u>24hr. Phone #</u>
Paul Nolan	Principal Investigator	215-762-6927	215-266-0121
Mike Mahoney	Co-investigator	215-762-6927	215-266-0121

Appendix D: Sample Questions

Phase One Questions:

Tell me how you describe yourself.

Tell me about your favorite music. *Follow-up:* What makes you like it better than other kinds of music?

Phase Two Questions:

(Before the music)

Can you tell me what we're going to listen to? *Follow-up:* Is there a reason you chose this specific song?

(During the music)

What is going on right now?

What are you reacting to in the music? *Follow-up:* "Can you tell me more about that," and similar follow-up questions will be asked in response to the co-researcher's responses throughout interview.

(After the music)

What happened in the music, and what was going on with you as a result of listening?

How is it different having music on, versus not having music on?

What does this music make you think about?

Does this song change your mood?

Do you feel anything in your body as you listen, or feel the urge to move?

How might you have a different reaction if I wasn't here?

(At the very end)

Now that you're nearly at the end of the interview, do you have any new thoughts or ideas about listening to your music?

