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The President's Pulse - Jamie Artman

Dearest members, friends, and colleagues -

Have you ever tried looking through glasses with smudges on the lens? Or put on sunglasses only to realize there are specks of dirt and debris blocking your vision? It's like you just *know* you aren't seeing clearly, but the culprit isn't as easy to identify depending on the size and makeup of the obstruction.

To me, this is what burnout feels like. The feeling of being able to see what you need to

see, but there's a fog in the way making everything appear distorted. There's that feeling of irritation, and even a decision making process. Sometimes we can wipe it away easily and get back to clearer vision, other times we need specific tools to get the job done right. Sometimes we just make it worse and say "oh, forget it," and let it progress until we can't see at all.

There are so many layers to what we call "burnout." Merriam-Webster defines the term in this context in the following way:

"Exhaustion of physical or emotional strength or motivation usually as a result of prolonged stress or frustration."

Psychologist Herbert Freudenberger coined the term "Burnout" in the 1970s to describe the effect of overwhelming stress and extreme ideals on the mental health of those serving in helping professions. Though it was initially used to refer to those in the medical field, over time it was expanded to include the stress of service. One even called it "the dark side of self-sacrifice."

Well then, I'm definitely burned out! Anyone else?

I am so proud of this organization and all of our members for constantly living in service of others. AND. I'm also incredibly sensitive at the moment to the potential toll this can take on our bodies, our minds, and our spirits.

So what do we do? A dear friend told me recently it's time to "shake it up." When vision becomes blurry, perhaps it's time to shift our priorities back to ourselves. Please accept this as an invitation, or even better, a challenge.

I invite you to challenge yourself to focus your vision inward – offering yourself the love and compassion you so surely offer everyone else.

I invite you to challenge yourself to shake it up and shift it!!! Focus more on what IS working than what ISN'T working, and give THAT the energy it deserves.

I invite you to challenge yourself to ASK FOR HELP! Those who live in service often find it difficult to receive in the same way they give. While noble, I'm reminded of the "empty cup" analogy...if your cup is empty, what are you pouring from? How do you refill so that you can continue to serve and remain full? I don't have the answer yet, but I am grateful to my mentors who keep reminding me to ask myself these same questions.

Right now, we are asking for help. I am asking for help. It's time to shake things up. As you may know, we've had some recent transitions in the Board of Directors, and I'd love to highlight some of our recent developments.

Please welcome to the board:

Greg Whitt - serving as our new Executive Director

Eric Swanson – serving as our new Treasurer

Debi Kret – serving as our new Newsletter editor

Rhonwyn Hagerdorn – serving in areas of communication and coordination.

Also please take a moment to send some light and love to those who have assisted in the process of creating, refining, and developing the BOD thus far. There are too many to name here, but we appreciate you and we definitely wouldn't be where we are without your commitment and dedication to our organization.


We are still in need of additional support in regards to *outreach, social media, conference planning, and diversity/equity/inclusion* (stay tuned for training opportunities. If you've been wanting to get involved, now's the time!

Alternatively, if you've been needing to ask for help but haven't yet for whatever reason, now is the time for that too. Let us know if/how we can support you better during this time; reach out to each other to stay connected and just say hi; reach out to that part of you that is longing for comfort and give yourself permission to receive it. Let's shift together.

- Jamie Artman is a Limited Licensed Professional Counselor, Music Therapist, and highly trained Drum Circle Facilitator

The Conference Pulse

Save the Date!



Drum Circle Facilitators Guild
17th Annual Conference
February 25-27, 2022

RHYTHM
RE-IMAGINED
Prescott Resort, Arizona, USA

The Community Pulse



Opening Doors of Opportunity through Beat the Odds[®]: Social and Emotional Skill Building Delivered in a Framework of Drumming

By Ping Ho, MA, MPH, Founder and Director, UCLArts & Healing

Beat the Odds[®] (BTO) is an evidence-based and trauma-informed program that can open doors of opportunity for drum circle facilitators. The 8-session program integrates activities from group drumming with activities from group counseling to build core strengths, such as focus and listening, team building, positive risk taking, self-esteem, awareness of others, leadership, expressing feelings, managing anger/stress, empathy and gratitude. BTO enhances the innate benefits of drumming with:

- Positive affirmations put to rhythm and then discussed (kids say they can't get them out of their heads, which is the point).
- Emotional coping strategies (such as putting feelings on the drum, thinking of things that make us feel happy or grateful, and guided visualization).
- Guided interaction through rhythmic activities serving as a metaphor for life, followed by reflection and dialogue (such as having volunteers play a drum in the middle of the circle and asking others how they thought it felt to go into the middle, as a way of teaching empathy).

Schools and organizations have become increasingly aware of the prevalence of trauma and are seeking evidence-based tools to address it. The effectiveness of BTO was originally published in the journal, *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine* in 2011. My UCLA colleagues and I found that the program can significantly reduce a spectrum of behavior problems in children related to inattention, withdrawn/depression, post-traumatic stress, anxiety, attention deficit/hyperactivity, oppositional defiance, and sluggish cognitive tempo ([Ho, Tsao, Bloch, & Zeltzer, 2011](#)).

Our findings are even more striking given that we stacked the odds against ourselves in designing the study. We used a school counselor with no music experience to deliver the program, we delivered it to a whole classroom of a mixed

experience to deliver the program, we delivered it to a whole classroom of a mixed population of students at a time (even though we were advised to work with smaller groups of “at risk” students in order to increase our likelihood of getting positive results), we worked with students right after lunch (which can be a challenging time to teach), and we worked with students in spring semester of fifth grade. We figured that if we were able to get positive results in this real-world scenario, it would greatly increase our confidence in the strength of the program.

In subsequent data we have gathered, we have observed that the program can be highly effective for special education students as well. Several teachers have also anecdotally reported that students throwing furniture in dysregulated moments are immediately calmed by engaging in group or one-on-one drumming.

BTO encourages development of a [growth mindset](#). Those with a growth mindset achieve more because they embrace making mistakes in the process of learning and, therefore, they embrace challenge. This is in contrast to fixed mindset, which believes that human capabilities are fixed at birth. We have observed that Beat the Odds encourages engagement, positive risk taking, and creativity emblematic of a growth mindset. Music teachers, general education teachers, and special education teachers have all reported increased classroom participation as a result of BTO, especially among shy students. One music teacher, who facilitates BTO with 6th graders, reported that she has never had so many kids volunteer to sing a solo in front of others in her choral class.

While the program was originally designed for upper-elementary-aged youth, it can be easily adapted for any age group and also serves as an effective tool for community building with staff and families. For ease and integrity of delivery, the BTO curriculum comes in the form of a scripted manual with explicit guidelines for management of activities, behavior, and logistics, as well as for adaptation to other populations.

For those of you wondering how to build demand for BTO services, we have observed that offering free demos can be an effective way to do so because the work speaks for itself. Volunteering can also strengthen your expertise and confidence, while providing you with an opportunity to gather testimonials, to acquire photos and video footage (remember to get written permission to use these), and to build your resume. It may even land you a job opportunity directly.

I once met a woman, at one of our BTO trainings, who had been out of the workforce for years. With her husband injured, she was now needing to be the sole provider for her family and wished to do so as a BTO facilitator. She first practiced with her son’s third grade classroom and then began offering free demos to kindergarten classrooms and preschools, saying, “If you like me, you can hire me.” Two years later, she had so much business that she needed to hire an assistant.

For more information about BTO, you can view a [3-minute inspirational video featuring students](#) and a [summary of this evidence-based program](#). You may also visit our [BTO information page](#), view a [12-minute documentary trailer](#), watch a [testimonial](#), and read [publications and media articles](#) featuring BTO, including media pieces on large scale implementation in [Fresno](#) and [Oxnard](#), CA. On our [website](#), you can also find information about our [quarterly online trainings](#), and [how to obtain a copy of the manual](#).

In closing, I’d like to express gratitude to Remo Belli for his visionary leadership and support for our work, and to my BTO co-developers, Mike DeMenno (drum circle facilitator) and Giselle Friedman (licensed clinical social worker).



Drummers Drop - In.

By Ray Watters

Drop - In: used to describe a place where people can go, usually to get help or advice, at any time without making an appointment.

Drummer: someone who plays a drum or a set of drums, especially in a music group. Cambridge University Dictionary.

"It's the relationship that heals" Irvin Yalom.

I was asked to write a few words about the weekly gathering that is the "Drummers Drop – In" or "Coffee, Cake and Catch – Up" and thought it would be useful to look at its genesis and what it is. Firstly, what is it? It is a virtual space once a week for any DCF's from around the globe to come together, share and to be. An opportunity to be witnessed without judgement. There is no pressure to take part, no agenda the floor is for those that want to or need to share, check in, to see how others are and how you are, ask questions, seek advice or just be amongst like-minded people. There are no wrong topics.

We have covered diverse subjects from loss and grief to the nuts and bolts of facilitation, sharing techniques, venue and audience considerations. A great conversation once developed around the finer points of facilitating a naturists event. We have covered instruments and instrument builds, cleaning, circle set ups, storytelling, books, catching up with old and new friends and seeing how we are all doing or not. You come and go as you please. We gather from all over the globe from the UK, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Germany, Australia, Malaysia, Hong Kong, USA and India. It is every Friday 2.00pm till 3.00pm London time.

"A door to worlds, the world of facilitation, and the world of human beings going through very rough times. Step in and, connections happen spontaneously with no effort, no matter the differences, no matter the distances. I feel among friends"

Giorgio Vanessa Colombo - cerchiodipercussioni

How it came about? Well, that's a slightly longer story.

We are as humans a gregarious people, in short, we are, as Aristotle once wrote "By nature a social animal." We thrive in company and we actively seek it out for a whole host of reasons which are perhaps too many to mention. We are a global community stretching from Europe through Asia, Africa, and the Americas. A community one of whose goals is to create and nurture connection. We have had a difficult year of acclimatization, embracing new roles, new technology whilst we wait for the world to return to a sense of recognizable balance. We are also on the whole. solo workers

calling on colleagues when we can, both physically and nowadays virtually. Sharing our triumphs, our learning opportunities and calling upon them for help when we need it. Our diversity is our strength.

"It 's easy to forget how much energy and self-belief it takes to be a self-employed one-man band. It 's so good to be able to join with others and hear people give voice to similar thoughts or offer solutions or encouragement, and to be reminded that you are part of an international caring family."

Simon Stokes - talking rhythms.

It has been a journey. When we first went into global retreat I decided to gather people together in the "When Drummers Gather" series of talks, webinars and sharing and the "Reflections in Rhythm" series to educate and share our passions for the work we do and maintain a sense of community for the people that we are. As a counsellor / psychotherapist working with clients it has been a year for many of isolation and for some, struggles to adjust to what is going on. For some of us our calendars emptied overnight, and we struggled with the loss of clients as well as business. A sense of loss of purpose, direction, and grief to name but a few. Feelings that should be manifested, witnessed, and acknowledged. For many of us as solo workers the avenue to do this was just not there. The opportunity to share one's grief, isolation, feelings and emotions was absent. We come together through our love of drumming, connection and building community.

The "Drop in" initially provided that creative, safe, non - judgmental space for people to see that their feelings were justified, that they were not alone and that many others were feeling the same. The emphasis on Cake, Coffee and Catch - Up was to create the image of a group good friends gathered around a table catching up on their week, and that is what we are.

"An opportunity to be in community with like-minded people who understand the emotional roller coaster the pandemic brought to our profession...having a forum for sharing and vulnerability that I don't often allow of myself, one that allowed for inspiration and heart-break all in the same space."

Greg Whitt - DrumforChange

"The Drummers drop in has been the only regular thing in my diary this year! What a wonderful group of people, so supportive, so empathetic, just wonderful."
Alison Surridge the drum lady.

The true global nature of the "Drop-in" is such that you catch up with friends, news, facilitation, trainings, workshops, feedback, recommendations and sharing from around the world. Access also to a hive mind of knowledge and experience. We continue to support each other, our chosen profession, and our community. Overtime the space has slowly morphed but is still ever present. Each Friday is an open door, no one knows what's coming or what people may bring, it's supportive, encouraging, spontaneous, funny, serious, moving, informative, open, non-judgmental and free. It is there to serve the community and the individual.

"A totally random community of drum facilitators of differing abilities who happily share their knowledge and life experiences whatever age or level of drumming they might be." Lawrie Sandford - swanagedrumcircles

As the world slowly returns to some form of balance then its role may no longer be required, but as the globe remains in different levels of alertness, lockdown and for some isolation then the time I feel should remain. That said I leave for a road trip in July for a month. I may try and run one from the wilds of Scotland, who knows? I will

return with the “Drop-In” in August. Look out for the notifications on Facebook, pages of drumwithus, UK Playshop, Business of Drumming and the European DCF group.

I look forward to meeting you then meanwhile reach out to someone and say “Hi” and ask them how they are doing?

Links to Reflections On Rhythm and When Drummers Gather :

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7SGWfYQQ5PhY2WcmgWKeVQ/videos>

Ray is a VMC Certified DCF, Core team member presenting the UK VMC Playshop, Rhythm 2 Recovery Trainer and practitioner, HealthRhythms facilitator and the founder of Drum with Us. Ray facilitates drum and rhythm workshops throughout the UK for a wide spectrum of audiences. He is also a qualified and working counsellor specializing working with adolescent boys.

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The Pulse from the Executive Director



Greg Whit

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR is a rather grand title for the Drum Circle Facilitators Guild's only paid employee. I work for our board of directors. My job is akin to what might be a Chief Operating Officer in other organizations. My role is to ensure our all-volunteer team has what they need to do their jobs well, to keep the board on task, to carry the institutional knowledge, to interface with vendors (like our webmaster, bank, and conference venues), to ensure back-office functions are working properly (like tending our member database, signing official documents, checking the mail, and filling in the gaps).

It's the job of our president to provide leadership and vision and to oversee our board meetings. Our treasurer watches over finances. Our secretary documents things and organizes our records. That's our executive committee; the must-haves according to our bylaws. We also have volunteers who plan our conference, manage the event calendar, handle our membership requests, and edit our newsletter. Beyond that we have people who review our bylaws and accreditation applicants and who support a variety of other interests on occasion.

I work for ALL of them. I work for all of their committees. AND I work for the organization as a whole to ensure its goals are met, to guard against mission creep, and to ensure our vision and direction remain true.

Nellie Hill has made all this look easy. I joined the Guild seventeen years ago and have followed in her footsteps as treasurer, president, committee member, and now as director. Her trail is steep, and easily discernible. Her retirement is well-earned. It's my goal to honor the tradition of excellence that she has set for the job, for the organization, and for you.

As Jamie mentioned, as a board we are experiencing an unprecedented post-pandemic shift in our staffing as valuable contributors reassess and realign their energies. There are still things to be done and still great need for people to do them. Things like managing our Facebook page. Things like reviewing our guiding regulations and organizing documents. Things like planning our upcoming symposiums in Arizona (2022) and South Carolina (2023).

It's my hope that you'll consider joining this team of do-gooders who want to shape the future of this non-profit membership association as well as the future of our profession on a grander scale. It's also my pleasure to continue to serve DCFG as the second- ever executive director. And it's my great hope that you'll help me do it.

Greg Whitt loves great food, second-hand stores, paddle-boarding, and mid-century modern design. He's an award-winning teaching artist and also a storyteller. Greg is the sole-proprietor of a small business called DRUM FOR CHANGE. He's also a part- time executive director of the DRUM CIRCLE FACILITATORS GUILD.

Check out this great article from Tom Alteen:
[Parallels Between the Percussive and Martial Arts](#)

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We are here to serve our community. Please let us know if you have comments, concerns or information that you would like to share with the community.

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