Emotional Wellness and Music
By Rachel Wilson

College kids love music. On any given day you could pass dozens of students listening to which ever Spotify playlist fits with their mood that day. Maybe one of their favorite artists just released a new album; or maybe they’ve found a cool, new alternative band from an online music blog. Whatever the source, music is an integral part of everyday life for the college student. With our busy schedules, rigorous academics, and hectic social lives, it seems that in those few minutes of walking to class with headphones on can serve as a refuge from the outside world. So how does what we play through those headphones effect how we feel?

Emotional Wellness is the ability to understand ourselves and cope with the challenges life can bring. The ability to acknowledge and share feelings of anger, fear, sadness, or stress; hope, love, joy, and happiness in a productive manner contributes to our emotional wellness. In this TED Talk by music therapist Kathleen Howard highlights the way music can actually be used for therapy and healing.

https://youtu.be/NiY4yCsGKXU

So how can we use music’s power to work for us?
Listen to Good Music

Whether it’s Kentucky bluegrass or Atlanta rap, listening to music you like with has a positive effect on mood. Even unfamiliar music with the same patterns has a positive effect on the way you feel. This National Geographic article explains how this happens.


Go see a show!

Venues like the Bridgestone Arena host huge concerts throughout the year that can serve as an outlet for the stressed student.
Vanderbilt also has concerts on campus at Blair and with VPB’s The Music Group

Make Music!
In this short video from The Centre for Performance Science cites making music as beneficial for one’s overall emotional health. Even if you don’t know people all that well, making music with them gives you a sense of community and emotional stability.
Organizations such as the Commodore Orchestra, Concert Choir, and others provide spaces for music performance.

Whether you’re a trained classical musician, the best freestyle rapper in Nashville, or just someone who likes to listen, music is a powerful asset to your emotional health. Utilize Vanderbilt’s campus and don’t be afraid to explore Nashville’s music scene to find a place to work on your Emotional Wellness.