

Drumming & Autism Training with Jim Donovan M.Ed.

Empower individuals with disabilities by learning how to engage them using rhythm and sound.
Attention to Task. Expression. Socialization. Stress Reduction.

Curriculum

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What is our goal?

To learn how to use rhythmic and musical strategies to elicit increased attention to task, support non verbal expression and as a means to encourage socialization in individuals on the Autism spectrum and other disabilities.

Understandings:

Participants in this training will understand how to . . .

- comfortably and effectively use percussion strategies with their clients.
- adapt existing intervention templates to their own specific client needs.
- create an atmosphere of acceptance and safety prior to implementing the interventions.
- design their own unique interventions.

and that...

- non-musicians can effectively use rhythm and sound with their clients.
- prior musical experience and the ability to read music is not a requirement.
- using percussion is not necessarily loud and disruptive
- there are ways for sound sensitive individuals to participate using technology.

Questions to be addressed:

- Why is simple rhythmic expression an effective way to elicit increased attention to task, support non verbal expression and as a means to encourage socialization in children on the Autism spectrum?
- What must one learn to maximize effectiveness when facilitating a percussion strategies?
- What skills do you need to be able to adapt an existing percussion strategies template to your own specific needs
- Why is it important to create an atmosphere of safety, acceptance and positivity before implementing a percussion intervention?

By the end of this training you will know. . .

- a philosophy of inclusive and accessible facilitation.
- methodology for creating safe, accepting and positive environments.
- methodology and examples of four percussion strategies foundation templates.
- the research behind the techniques.

By the end of this training you will be able to. . .

- facilitate percussion strategies with children on the Autism spectrum and other disabilities.
- adapt percussion strategies to their own specific client needs.
- design their own unique percussion strategies

What is a Percussion Intervention?

A percussion (or rhythm) intervention is a technique that uses easy to learn percussion approaches, instruments, and methods as a way to elicit a desired behavioral response, such as maintaining attention-to-task, improving socialization skills, or increasing the ability to communicate. Examples of percussion interventions include (but are not limited to):

- Providing an individual an opportunity to freely explore a musical or sound making instrument as a means of maintaining and/or rewarding attention to task
- Providing an individual with a "shaker" or other percussion instrument that allows the child to maintain attention or focus in noisy or distracting environment
- Setting up a safe and accepting social space where individuals may experience being with a group using a variety rhythm circle techniques.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

I have never facilitated, taught music. Will I be able to do this? Yes.

Percussion Intervention Training welcomes persons of all experience levels including those with no musical or teaching experience. You will not need to know how to read musical notation, nor will you need a background in music theory. The training is designed to take you as you are and give you the skill sets you need to begin creating your own rhythm-based interventions. If you do have musical, teaching or facilitating experience you may find interesting ways to connect your current expertise to this new learning.

I already have music therapy, musical teaching and/or facilitation experience. Will I learn anything new at your training? Yes.

If you already have music therapy, musical teaching and/or facilitation experience, you may be familiar with some of what will be shared. That being said, this training is unique in the way it shows you how to both perform and create your own unique interventions.

Is a Percussion Intervention music therapy? No.

While Percussion Interventions and Music Therapy both share the tool of music in their respective approaches there are important differences. Music Therapy is a highly regarded field in which the practitioners spend many years of schooling learning to apply a wide range of techniques to a many different needs and situations.

In contrast, the concept of Percussion Intervention is to offer complementary approaches that are simultaneously accessible, effective and evidence based to anyone who is willing to learn

them. Each approach is designed as a way of providing people who work with individuals & groups with disabilities new “tools for their tool box.” Percussion Interventions are not intended as a replacement for any therapy, nor should practitioners use them to diagnose or treat any condition or illness.

Instead, the Percussion Intervention concept offers an access point for anyone to use sound technologies, and simple methods as a way to elicit a desired behavioral responses, such as maintaining attention-to-task, improving socialization skills, releasing stress or encouraging verbal and non-verbal communication.

Are these techniques research based? Yes.

This program was developed as part of a highly successful and well-publicized research study conducted by Saint Francis University's Center of Excellence for Remote and Medically Under-Served Areas (CERMUSA). This study measured the efficacy of training healthcare professionals in the use of percussion interventions with children with Autism. The research findings of this ongoing study have shown that the use of simple percussion interventions can enable children with Autism and others with attention deficit disorders to significantly improve their attention to task and even increase their overall level of engagement with caregivers. Research so far has demonstrated average increases in attention to task of 189% in as little as 12 weeks.

About the Trainer

Jim Donovan is a musician and educator whose mission is to empower, inspire and connect people. In his work, Donovan uses music as a vehicle for personal growth, healing, and the creation of community. He was a founding member of the multi-platinum 90's band Rusted Root and was voted "Drum Circle Facilitator of the Year" by the readers of Drum! magazine. He holds a BA in classical music performance from the University of Pittsburgh and is completing graduate work in Education Leadership at Saint Francis University where he is also on faculty. Donovan offers unique training programs designed to teach anyone how to use effective group rhythm, vocal toning, and other holistic techniques as tools for wellness with groups. One of these offerings entitled Percussion Intervention Training, is based on research he is involved in at Saint Francis that teaches professionals like occupational therapists, medical professionals, and educators how to use rhythm and sound as a complementary intervention for individuals with Autism and other children with disabilities. In addition to his musical credentials, Donovan is an author, husband and father of 3.