

***The Anti-Isolation Toolkit:***  
Sounds That Provide Human Connection &  
Healing in the Age of Coronavirus

**Final Project for WST494: Sound and Well-Being**

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**Introduction and Project Overview**

*CARLY:* Hello! Thank you so much for taking the time out of your busy schedule to be here with us in these stressful and unprecedented times. We are four Arizona State University students from a variety of disciplines and backgrounds who are adapting, like you, to the ever-changing new reality of our lives under COVID-19. One of the most difficult aspects of this entire global situation has been the mass uncertainty and isolation that all of us have confronted every single day -- our hearts and thoughts are with every single human being who is suffering alone, whether due to illness, economic, or social stress. We wanted to use our final project in this course to offer some connection, peace, and perhaps even healing to anyone we could possibly reach through various forms of sound: our own voices, the work of talented musicians, and the soothing voices of others.

With that goal in mind, we present this anti-isolation toolkit -- a free resource that contains various links to healing & connecting sounds, as well as original content created by the four of us that focuses on the healing aspect of the human voice. Each of the external resources linked has a personal write-up from one of us detailing how it helped us cope with COVID-19. Our original content, embedded in this document, can also be accessed on YouTube. We hope this will be useful to you and that you will share it with others who may need a little peace and connection in this strange world.

The table of contents, for your convenience, is below. Be well!

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### **Original Content**

It was important to us that we synthesize our learning from this course into a sound experience that could be healing to both listeners as well as the creators. Three of us have created sound experiences that we feel can offer some comfort or connection during COVID-19. Links to each and a brief description of the content is below. Brian, Carly, and Jahdeea created original content, and Marshall mixed soothing music sounds in the background and uploaded them to SoundCloud.

#### [Mildred & The Fly](#)

*BRIAN:* This is a short audio version of a short story I wrote using magical realism. The story is about a 66 year old woman, Mildred, who ends up contracting COVID-19. Things escalate quickly and she finds herself alone in the hospital with death hanging in the air. An unexpected companion shows up and through their bond, healing happens. This is my first attempt at such writing and it certainly needs work, but I hope you find it somewhat entertaining. To read along, here is the [full text](#). This story was inspired by stories I read about COVID-19 victims, my reading of Donna Haraway's *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, as well as, my own personal experience with a fly companion on a lonely drive through the desert to the California coast.

## [Fireside Chats about COVID-19](#)

*CARLY:* In our new digitally enhanced world, most of us are only speaking to others via video chatting platforms. We may be still seeing our friends via Skype, but are missing out on the day-to-day, quiet intimate one-on-one conversations with loved ones that are so beneficial to our connection and well-being. This "[fireside chat about COVID-19](#)" is meant to be a short 12-minute personal connection between me and you that can allow both of us to share the healing sound of our own voices and talk honestly about the situation at hand, in an intimate, laid-back way. I recorded this on my balcony very early in the morning, so this moment is a unique moment that only exists between the two of us -- it is the sound of my voice with soothing piano sounds mixed into the background. I hope you will benefit from this and feel some kind of connection to me and to others.

## [Two Friends, a Conversation, and a Virus](#)

*JAHDEEA:* This is a [conversation](#) between two friends who have been communicating during this virus and what their focus is. Most people nowadays would be discussing everything about the virus that is rather stressful instead of other conversations. The idea of this script was to shine a light on more of the hidden positive side of the virus to change one's mindset and make individuals think of answers for questions they have never been asked before. My entire goal for this conversation was just to try and change the mindset of those who are really having a rough time with the virus. Hopefully, hearing this conversation will encourage others to have a different approach to what is going on in the world right now.

## External Resources

### Meditation and Spiritual Resources

#### [Pandemic Care Resources](#) from Tara Brach

*BRIAN:* Tara is a Clinical Psychologist/Buddhist practitioner that does various guided meditations to cultivate mindfulness and well-being. When I was new to meditation and Buddhist ways of thinking I went through a lot of meditations/talks - hers were some of the most helpful for me. Especially her meditations and discussions, I thoroughly enjoy them. She links a bunch of videos and resources here.

#### **Bioneers - Revolution from the Heart of Nature:**

#### [What Bioneers are saying about COVID-19](#)

*BRIAN:* Bioneers is an incredible organization made up of individuals from many different walks of life and fields all relative to sustainability/shifting toward a deeper relationship with Mother Earth. This post has links to articles from Naomi Klein , Bill McKibben, and others that each speak to different aspects of the pandemic from capitalism and its role/response to personal well-being tips to xenophobia. If you're into this work please look more into this organization!

#### **Charles Eisenstein - A New and Ancient Story Podcast -**

#### [Sayer Ji: Beyond the Coronavirus](#)

*BRIAN:* Charles Eisenstein is a writer/speaker that has some really interesting perspectives on spirituality/sustainability/etc. This is his podcast conversing with Sayer Ji, founder of greenmedinfo.com, whom I didn't know anything about prior to listening. He has some interesting perspectives, , from conspiracy theories to evidence based research supporting alternative views, and they do a good job at presenting them as just perspectives and not truths. And, like most podcasts, the topics shift and move into interesting territory.

#### **Deepak Chopra - [Spiritual Healing Amidst COVID-19](#)**

*BRIAN:* Deepak is a famous doctor, author, meditator, etc. that is a huge proponent of mind-body medicine. As an MD, he is trained in Western medicine, as well as Ayurveda (traditional Indian medicine). I'm currently reading his book Quantum Healing, which has been very insightful and full of wonderful insights into how there is miraculous intelligence at work in our bodies that has a seemingly unlimited potential for

healing. This link is to his Facebook where he has been posting daily videos, about 20 mins in length, that all relate to spiritual healing amidst COVID-19.

**Plum Village - Br Phap Luu - [Compassion and Connection Amidst COVID-19](#)**

*BRIAN:* This is a dharma talk from a buddhist monk at Plum Village monastery in France. Plum Village was founded by Zen Master Thich Naht Hanh who has pioneered 'engaged Buddhism' and how to live mindfully amidst the Anthropocene. While this talk is not by Thich, the monk who speaks is trained in Thich's teachings and I found it very calming and empowering for life in quarantine. I especially like the practice of gratitude for all the things we have right now and knowing that we have everything we need to be happy right here and now. There is also some good advice for how to mindfully stay informed by the news without getting overwhelmed or controlled by the persistent fear laden throughout.

**Plum Village - Phap Dung - [This is a Noble Moment](#)**

*BRIAN:* Another dharma talk from Plum Village, this time monk Phap Dung discusses how this unprecedented time can be perceived as a noble moment in that there are truths being shown to us if we choose to awaken to them. He calls for us to hold nurses, doctors, aid workers, etc. in our hearts deeply, as they are our bodhisattvas during this time. He also reminds us that this event is really not unprecedented in the context of human history, and that we can make peace with impermanence and suffer less when we understand this. To do these things, we are reminded to take time away from the news and daily business of life to sit quietly with our breathing. This is where we may find the noble truths of this present moment.

**Olafur Arnalds - [Nyepi \(silent day\)](#)**

*BRIAN:* About a month ago I was listening to a live performance by Olafur Arnalds for KEXP and before he plays the song 'Nyepi' he tells this wonderful story about how he wrote the song. He was in Bali at the time and in Balinese culture they practice one full day of silence/contemplation where no one goes out, buys things, works, etc. And the idea is to give the Earth a break from humans for a day. When I heard that I thought, wow! What if we did that globally, how incredible would that be. Now, with a basically global quarantine, we are giving Mother Earth a much needed break and the healing that is happening is incredible. This live version of the song from a concert in München is absolutely beautiful and has been my anthem for quarantine.

## Concerts and Musical Resources

### [A List Of Live Virtual Concerts](#) To Watch During The Coronavirus Shutdown

*MARSHALL:* Coronavirus situation is still out of control at time of writing, and people are suffering this tough time; one of the biggest challenges is the social isolation caused by events, school, and work being put on hold. The silver lining is, lots of musicians and artists no matter individuals or institutions have moved their musical joy to the internet. Categorized by musicians and genre, the information the NPR provides will constantly upload and update until these activities are not needed.

These are free shows. People can enjoy these concerts so that they can pass this tough time more easily and musicians will be supported by the foundations and donations which help them survive with venues and bars on lockdown across the country. This provides a way for people to express their emotions through creating, sharing, and listening to music even during lockdown.

### [Classical Music Concerts](#) Livestreamed During Coronavirus

*JAHDEEA:* This is a link that contains a musician in their living room giving a performance for others to stream online who are fond of classical music concerts. Classical music is well known to be calming, relaxing, and beautiful to listen to, so hopefully this link provides listeners with both joy and relaxation like it provided to me!

#### [Gloria Campaner: Livestreamed Concert](#)

*JAHDEEA:* Gloria Campaner is a pianist who took the time to research her favorite piano pieces to share with the world while we are all struggling at home. This livestreamed concert was very helpful to me because it contains a lot of soothing music that has the ability to bring peace to one's mind. Piano, in my opinion, is one of the most calming instruments to listen to in times of stress.

#### Arizona State University - School of Music - [Livestreamed Percussion Concert](#)

*JAHDEEA*: Contrary to the other link that will provide one with peace, this performance would make anyone want to dance or vibe with the music! It was really great listening to this concert because it has the ability to lift one's spirits and ease their mind about what's going on with the outside world. Dancing is one of the best ways to bring joy to one's life!

## **Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR)**

### **What is ASMR?**

*CARLY*: ASMR is an acronym for [Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response](#), a term used to describe a feeling of tingling and overall bodily relaxation that typically begins in the scalp after hearing certain sounds, receiving personal attention/gentle touch, or watching something satisfying. It has been explained as an 'invisible headscratch' or like 'head tingles/goosebumps'. Many people first notice this sensation during childhood; common first experiences include a parent or classmate playing with their hair, whispering at a sleepover, or being read a story in a classroom. This sensation is extremely relaxing and can help people destress, reduce anxiety, feel connected to others, and even fall asleep. There are a vast number of sounds and experiences that trigger ASMR, from soft speaking to tapping to the sounds of crinkling paper, and there are YouTube videos dedicated to each one; [there are even videos to help you identify what triggers your ASMR](#), if you experience the phenomenon!

[ASMR has a thriving community on YouTube](#), with some 'ASMRtists' having more than two million subscribers due to ASMR's ability to relax even those who do not experience the 'tingles' associated with ASMR. I personally have experienced this sensation since childhood and, because I struggle with insomnia, I use these YouTube videos to help me fall asleep nearly every night.

I feel that ASMR is one of the best examples of how sound can be used to promote well-being, especially in this new age of Coronavirus. For those struggling with depression and loneliness, personal attention videos (wherein the person creating the video pretends to be a friend or family member who is interacting with you) can help people feel more connected to others and practice positive affirmations. While this is not a substitute for real-life human interaction, it can certainly be a good substitute during a time when we are extremely isolated. For those struggling with anxiety regarding the global situation, ASMR videos can help to decrease anxious feelings and reach a state of relaxation; many people liken ASMR videos to meditation and mindfulness practices ([both proven to have positive psychical and emotional benefits](#)), and there are [ASMR meditation videos specifically designed for this purpose!](#)

Another benefit of watching these videos is that ASMR can be helpful to induce sleep. [Sleep deprivation increases your risk for severe effects from the Coronavirus](#), and with many people's entire life routines being completely interrupted during this crisis, many people are having difficulties maintaining healthy or normal sleep schedules. Using these videos to help you fall asleep and maintain a normal sleep routine is not only beneficial for protecting you from the virus but also for maintaining a sense of normalcy and health during such unprecedented times.

Finally, there are even [Coronavirus ASMR](#) videos that can educate you about the virus while helping you relax or fall asleep! Some of these videos take the form of a calm doctor explaining details about how the virus is transmitted and the symptoms if you contract it, which can be a great way to stay up to date about the virus without the anxiety associated with checking the news these days.

### **ASMR Resources**

*CARLY*: ASMR definitely is not for everyone -- but with thousands of videos available for free on YouTube and hundreds of triggers, it is one way people can use sound to relax, connect with others, and destress during one of the most difficult global situations we have experienced in our lifetimes. If you are interested in learning more or watching some videos to see if this can be helpful to you, here are a few places to start:

[r/ASMR](#): a subreddit dedicated to 'sounds that feel good' where people post their favorites

[List of Popular ASMR YouTubers](#) - their wide appeal makes this a good place to start for the uninitiated

[List of Popular Triggers](#) - this article can link you to examples of popular triggers and give you keywords to search on YouTube

### **Conclusion and Final Thoughts**

*CARLY*: While certainly not a definitive list of every sound resource that can help you heal, relax, or connect with others, we hope this document of some of the resources we have found most useful can be beneficial to you during this time of stress and

uncertainty. Please feel free to share this document with anyone who could benefit from it, and thank you once again for taking the time to connect with us by reading our words and listening to our original content.

Wishing you safety, peace, and health,

Carly Golding, Brian Grant, Jahdeea Small, and Marshall Ma