

## AIMS

- The goal of the Global Council on Brain Health (GCBH) is to translate scientific research into actionable recommendations for the public that will help drive behavior change in individuals across communities and cultures.
- To understand attitudes and behaviors that adults aged 40+ are currently engaging in as well as self-perceptions of brain health through the collection of survey data.
- The GCBH aims to provide the scientific foundation for policy recommendations aimed at improving public health.

## INTRODUCTION

As people live longer, the need for clear, trustworthy information on brain health is greater than ever. Launched in 2015, the GCBH is an independent collaborative of scientists, clinicians, scholars and policy experts convened by AARP to provide the foremost thinking on what people and professionals can do to maintain and improve brain health. AARP founded the Council in partnership with Age UK.

The GCBH operates as a hub-and-spoke collaborative to address the many factors that can impact brain health. A core group of thirteen experts comprise “the hub” or governance committee. This group leads issue-matter experts – “the spokes” – in examining lifestyle areas identified through surveys.

## METHODS

**Survey Data:** A nationally representative survey of adults age 18+ was conducted online from April 1-14, 2020 via Ipsos KnowledgePanel®. The survey was weighted to include a balance of respondents by demographics. The margin of error for the total sample is +/- 1.8%.

**GCBH Recommendations:** GCBH experts from five countries were asked to examine the state of the science as of February 2020. Experts represent diverse disciplines including music therapy, gerontology, neuroscience, psychology, neuroradiology, psychiatry, and rehabilitative medicine.

Recommendations were released 30 June 2020 and are available at:

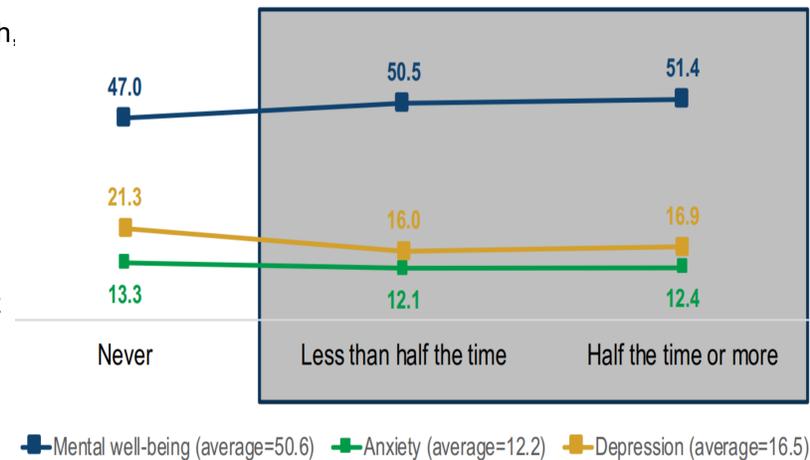
<https://www.aarp.org/health/brain-health/global-council-on-brain-health/music/>

## RESULTS

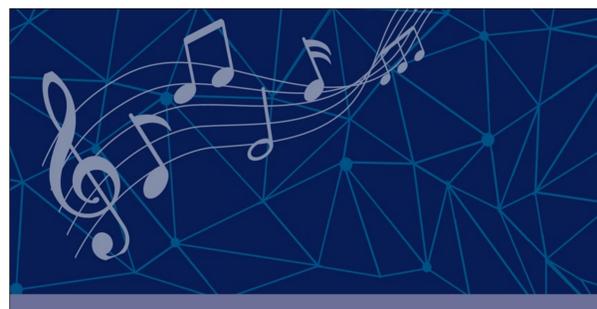
### Survey Results

- AARP’s survey found that adults who engage in music making and listening are more likely to self-report their overall health, brain health, and cognitive function as excellent or very good.
- Adults who engage in music also report lower average levels of anxiety and depression (see chart at right).
- Adults with no early exposure to music but who currently engage in some music appreciation show above average mental well-being scores thus making up for a lack of early exposure.

Average scores for well-being, anxiety, and depression by listening to background music



## Consensus and Recommendations on Music and Brain Health



### Music on Our Minds: The Rich Potential of Music to Promote Brain Health and Mental Well-Being

#### Selected Expert Consensus Statements\*

1. Music is a powerful way to stimulate your brain.
2. Music impacts different regions of the brain including those involved in hearing/listening, movement, attention, language, emotion, memory, and thinking skills.
3. Music engages multiple parts of the brain and helps them work together.
4. Music can help people recall meaningful memories and emotions.
5. Music is important to promote mental well-being.

#### Selected Expert Recommendations\*

1. Incorporate music in your life. Music may improve well-being including quality of life. Listening to music provides a resource for enjoyment and entertainment, especially when shared with family and loved ones.
2. Dance, sing or move to music. These activities not only provide physical exercise but they can also relieve stress, build social connections, and are fun ways to stimulate your brain!
3. Enjoy listening to familiar music that comforts you and evokes positive memories and associations.
4. Try listening to new music. While listening to music that you know and like tends to cause the strongest brain response and dopamine release, unfamiliar melodies may stimulate your brain, while providing a new source of pleasure as you get used to hearing them.

\*In total, the report provides 13 points of consensus around music and healthy aging and 5 for treatment of disease or injuries, 10 recommendations for individuals and 2 for communities, as well as 7 practical tips.

## DISCUSSION

- Music is a powerful force that can improve mental health and well-being. But a great deal of work is needed to better understand how our brains hear and perceive music, and whether music has a role in promoting adults’ memory and thinking skills as they age.
- How to best apply music as a tool in cognitive therapy remains a matter of debate. Whether music can be applied as a tool to improve thought processes for those with dementia remains an unanswered question.



Infographic available at [GlobalCouncilonBrainHealth.org](http://GlobalCouncilonBrainHealth.org)

## REFERENCES

**Brain Health and Mental Well-Being:** GCBH Recommendations on Feeling Good and Functioning Well (2018)

**Engage Your Brain:** GCBH Recommendations on Cognitively Stimulating Activities (2017)

**The Brain and Social Connectedness:** GCBH Recommendations on Social Engagement and Brain Health (2017)

**The Brain-Body Connection:** GCBH Recommendations on Physical Activity and Brain Health (2016)

Reports available at [GlobalCouncilonBrainHealth.org](http://GlobalCouncilonBrainHealth.org)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS / CONTACT

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