

STAY Tuned Episode 21- Improving Mental Health Through Community-Based Music, Writing, and Art Programs with Davy Yue

[00:00:00]

Emily: Welcome back to stay tuned, supporting transition age youth. This podcast is brought to you by the Transitions to Adulthood Center for Research at UMass Chan Medical School, Department of Psychiatry, and in partnership with our research sponsor, the National Institute for Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research.

I'm your co host, Emily.

Mei: And I'm your co host, Mei.

Emily: And today we're joined by Davy Yue. Davy, would you like to introduce yourself?

Davy: Yeah. Hello, my name is Davy. Uh, I'm an advocate within the mental health space. And I also, as a part of my advocacy, leverage music and creativity.

Mei: Thanks so much for being here. Super excited. Cause, um, for those listening, Davy's actually a member of our young adult advisory board here at, uh, the Transitions to Adulthood Center for Research. So because of that, um, I get to see Davy's lovely face once a month.

Um, but this is like a really exciting opportunity to, I feel like, get to know you even better, um, and talk about one of your passions, uh, which we don't usually get to do, um, [00:01:00] during those advisory board meetings. So really pumped to have you here.

Davy: Yeah, just really glad to be here.

Mei: Yeah. Um, so you've spoken a little bit about your own lived mental health experience in the past and your love of music as a member of our young adult advisory board.

Um, and so our new Center on Community Inclusion and Reflective Collaboration, also known as the CIRC Center, focuses on , community participation, as a means to improving your mental health amongst young adults from marginalized or disadvantaged backgrounds. So would you be able to tell us a little bit about how music has served as a coping skill for your mental health?

Davy: Yeah, absolutely. So during the pandemic, as many people were experiencing that, I myself experienced and often struggled with my mental health. And so, uh, as I was trying to navigate, you know, a sudden shift in terms of society, in terms of available programming and [00:02:00] events that were happening, I decided to pick up my alto sax.

It was an instrument, my alto sax, that I hadn't done since high school or middle school. So it had been quite a few years. And so as I picked up that instrument, I was relearning everything. I had no idea how to read sheet music. Uh, didn't even remember what was the pentatonic scale or harmonies. And so I was relearning the saxophone.

Just tapping into those fundamentals. And so I was, I love picking up that instrument again. I found again, my love for music in particular, through using the saxophone to be able to better express myself and understand myself. And so I found that music, in addition to the songs that I chose to learn and master over the course of the time, since the pandemic, I found that those songs allowed me to tap into the parts of myself that I wasn't able to do so before strictly through just written word or spoken word and so music in many ways allowed me to process the events that were happening during that week or during that day and be able to understand them better [00:03:00] through music as a medium.

And so, as I was learning the instrument again since the pandemic, I gradually added songs to my repertoire through, you know, a couple minutes here of practice, a couple minutes there of practice. And so, uh, some of the songs that I eventually were able to add. Uh, included all of me, uh, by John Legend, a song that the musical cover of the song, uh, still carries over the romantic undertones of the lyrics themselves, but the melody as captured through the saxophone allowed me to sort of tap into the side of myself that wasn't really, uh, explored in my day to day work or expressed as explicitly.

And so all of me, at least in the melody sense, allowed me to process parts of me that were more. Idealized, creative than my typical day to day work, which tends to be very technical. And so another song that I gradually added to my

repertoire was Eye of the Tiger by Survivor. Um, it's a song that's very uplifting, upbeat, uh, has [00:04:00] a lot of great energy.

Um, it's, it's over, I believe 90, uh, beats per minute. So it's very enthusiastic and. When I play that song, I feel connected to the part of myself that is motivated and always wants to persevere and push forward despite any challenges that I face during that day or during the week. And so, those are sort of the first two songs that I add to my repertoire during the course of the pandemic.

And a few of the other songs that I also learned as time went on was Perfect by Ed Sheeran, which has a very similar sort of underlying premise as All of Me. Being a romance and being a pop song. Perfect, in the way that it's expressed in the melody and the notes, is a little bit different in that Perfect provides more so of an approach that is nostalgic rather than being immersed in the moment.

So, through that song, as I choose to play it when I feel necessary, allows me to tap into that side of myself. In addition to nostalgia, there is Careless [00:05:00] Whisper by George Michaels as well as Um, How Deep is Your Love by Bee Gees. Both of those songs have tremendous power in allowing me to reflect on past versions of myself times when I may have looked back and wished that I was still in that moment, you know, years and years later.

And so music with all these songs in my repertoire allows me to reflect. Process, you know, life and process of my emotion, my experiences in a way that, uh, would be sometimes difficult to convey through words or literature or writing. So in addition with music, I've leveraged these songs to be able to tap into each of them as I need.

And so some days if I feel more stressed out, I'll, I'll play, uh, Hallelujah by Pentatonix or All of Me by John Legend. And, uh, what else? The day is fairly relaxed, and I just need a bit of an energy boost, then I play Eye of the Tiger by Survivor. So actually, the way that I have set up in my room is that I have my desk, I have my [00:06:00] computer, you know, everything I need to do my work and to engage in those capacities.

But right behind my desk, I have my instrument that I can easily turn around in my chair and set up in two or three minutes and be able to play a song that I want within five or six minutes. So I ensure that on a day to day basis, I have immediate and ready access to the instrument so that I, if I feel like I need to play a song to be able to better express myself and understand the chaos of a particular day, I can easily do so.

And so, uh, part of my work in applying creativity to my own mental wellness, I actually spoke about this topic at a keynote speech for a summit in the past February. So if you don't mind, I'd love to read a really short excerpt from that speech.

Mei: Yeah, please go ahead.

Davy: So, here it is. Each musical note I play becomes a thoughtful step towards serenity, a [00:07:00] soothing balm for past wounds, and a warm kiss of a cosmic healer.

In the comforting embrace of rhythm and harmony, my soul finds solace, my heart finds peace. And my mind finds meditation as the courageous hackathon of struggles transforms into an elegant musical symphony of hope. The saxophone's soulful voice, a gentle whisper in the forgotten night, becomes a magnificent lighthouse beacon, guiding me beyond the trembling shadows of doubt to the new dawn of selflessness.

In this musical epic of adventure. I rediscover parts of me lost to the tales of time. And with each movement's crescendo, I rise stronger and more resilient. Ready to face it with a faithful song sealed in my hopeful heart. And through music, I find myself encountering endeavors to express the inexpressible, [00:08:00] to touch the intangible, and to connect with the unspoken emotions of the soul, and to travel along the eternal boundaries of human experience.

And understanding music transcends the barriers of language, allowing us to communicate feelings and ideas that are otherwise difficult to convey as it builds captivating bridges between cultures through time and beyond space. And so I shared that bit of an excerpt during my speech back in February actually for a summit on empowering youth and young adults through mental health and through alternative approaches to wellness.

And so, in many ways, you know, music does provide that alternative approach, you know, beyond pharmacological approaches, beyond therapy, beyond traditional adventures. And so music really kind of fills those gaps, at least in my experience, to be able to better understand myself and also [00:09:00] be able to tap into the side.

It's been really explored in my day to day work, stemming with technical work that I typically do. That

Emily: was beautiful. Thank you for sharing that excerpt. Um, I feel like I should, like, give you, like, snaps. Like, that was very poetic. Um, but yeah, thank you. And, and you're right. I mean, music and, and other, like, creative outlets can definitely be very therapeutic.

And I feel like they're not always talked about but like there's something that are often more readily accessible to people. Um, and I think that's great too that you're able to like, you know, figure out which songs can help you tap into certain emotions or help you like work through certain emotions in your day to day life.

Um, I think that's, that's really impressive. Um, it sounds like you have a lot of fun with it. So that's great.

Mei: Yeah, you got great taste. I love, I love the song choices, first of all. Um, but yeah, I think, oh, go ahead. Sorry.

Davy: [00:10:00] No, I was going to say, you know, it was difficult for me, at least in the beginning, to choose which songs I wanted to learn, simply because, you know, I wanted enough songs in my repertoire that I had a decent, decent amount of variety, but also have a level of variety in which I could have versions of different songs that I could tap into, should I have that, you know, necessity in that part of the day. And so, you know, songs are incredibly short, you know, they're less than five minutes each, sometimes just three or four minutes. But being mindful in those three or four minutes for me, you know, allows me to really tap into the power of music, even if it's less than five minutes.

And five minutes of itself can pass by. So quickly, much, much faster than expected.

Mei: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, what comes to mind as you're talking is almost like it's a form of meditation and a period of mindfulness for you. Um, so that's, that is so cool to think about how you, you have found that sort of peace and [00:11:00] relaxation through your music.

The other thing too, is like, I think it's, it's really difficult to make time for those creative outlets as well, especially like if you are, I don't know if you've lost touch with those creative outlets I think getting back into it and sort of like having to relearn a lot of things can at first be a little bit discouraging because it's like man like I lost this knowledge that I worked really hard to gain.

So getting back into it and relearning things is a challenge and you really do have to stick with it. I think I, I myself have experienced that with, um, different instruments in the past. Cause like I too picked up piano and, um, my guitar again during the pandemic. Um, I feel like there's no better time to do that because you had so much time on your hands and your men, my mental health at least wasn't the best during the pandemic.

Davy: Yeah, I would, you know, what a coincidence. I also tried to pick up the guitar in [00:12:00] addition to the saxophone for a period of two months. I immediately dropped it following those two months simply because I didn't, I didn't have the capacity to build the calluses.

And also my, relatively speaking, the wingspan of my hand is very short, so it's hard to, you know, do this chord but I would also say, you know, in addition to just learning, not everyone has the capacity or the financial ability to be engaged in, you know, learning an instrument or practicing, even if it's, you know, one that's as readily accessible as the piano or the guitar, you know, out there, I would say, you know, another way that I approach music for wellness is having a playlist, you know, I think almost everyone, you know, and their grandmother And their grandfather has access to Spotify or YouTube.

And so actually one of the approaches that I use that has a much lower barrier of entry is I have a bunch of different playlists, um, playlists that are designed similarly to the way that I choose my songs and that there are four different [00:13:00] moods, different mindsets, different ways for me to process different types of situations.

There's a song that's more soft pop, more romance. There's this one sort of a playlist that's more soft pop and romance. Uh, there's a playlist that's more hip hop and R& B. There's one that's just solely instrumental covers of songs. And so, I have that so that I know, you know, if I'm having a particularly stressful day, I know that this particular playlist can let me express that mood.

Emily: Yeah. Yeah. Thank you for mentioning that too. Cause yeah, I mean, you know, a lot of people aren't, you know, they don't have access to an instrument or that's just not something that they're really interested in learning. And yeah, making playlists for like different moods.

It's definitely, it's one, it's fun to do that. I think to like figure out which songs you like that kind of correspond with certain moods and then being able to like have that. You know, just to turn on so easily if you're feeling that and kind of like process through it with, with the songs. I think that's, that's really great.

Um, and I know like you had mentioned, you know, [00:14:00] starting to pick this back up during the pandemic. And, um, you had mentioned to us when we talked before this podcast about how you found like an, you found an online community during the pandemic for music. And I think you said poetry. Um, so I was wondering like what.

It was like to be a part of that group that prioritized providing that creative outlet during the pandemic.

Davy: Yeah, absolutely. So for a while during the pandemic, everything was shut down. There's nothing to do outside of that. So I started searching for groups that are online and that were aligned with my particular interests and strengths that I want to continue to explore in a time when.

You know, the world was relatively speaking, you know, falling apart at that time. And so I was exploring this online and looking for different groups and I found a lot of creative writing. And so I started joining those and I found that the ones that were implemented through a mental health organization not only allowed me to be [00:15:00] creative within the scope of those groups, but also allowed me to feel well mentally.

And so, you know, I was, Incredibly grateful to be a part of those groups where they would start with a mental health checking, asking, how was your day? How was your week? How's that going? You know, let's sit in and discuss that. And so the first part of the meeting at least 10 or 20 minutes or so was dedicated to that, to build that community and understanding, trust and supporting each other.

And then the latter half of the meeting for the remaining hour or so would be creative writing exercise. So we would receive a prompt from the facilitator. Sometimes it would be sci fi, sometimes it would be. Fantasy, drama based, and so, uh, the facilitator would provide the prompt, and we'd have about, uh, 10 to 15 minutes to write.

And so, I would always, uh, pull up two tabs on my computer. I had one that was, uh, Merriam Webster, to allow me to switch between different words I wanted to use in, in the poetry that I was writing. I also had another tab open that was, uh, RhymeZone, so that I [00:16:00] could, uh, rhyme my way through my poetry, and have You know, alliteration, but also a good combination of, I am a contaminator, if and when I could use that, and so, uh, being part of those communities, honestly, was tremendously helpful in a time when it was very hard to connect with people, since there were no in person

events, and so, in, in those communities, I was able to meet people and, you know, learn about their approaches to life, how they viewed the world through what they wrote, and, and most of the times it was poetry, uh, sometimes it was just written pieces of narrative work, or, you know, Other forms of literature.

The online community was tremendously beneficial in letting me connect with people that I otherwise would not have met whatsoever. And so, in addition to the ones with the Mental Health Organization, I was involved with a writers workshop group for quite some time.

It's called the Burlington Writers Workshops, and they had a number of different creative writing seminars and workshops and sessions. Some were actually about songwriting. It was [00:17:00] a topic that I had never delved into before, you know, writing my own song, but within that group, and among, you know, many other amateurs that were in that group, we were able to explore songwriting, you know, as an art, as a hobby.

I mean, none of us would probably write to the level of John Legend or, or Ed Sheeran, but it was an entertaining form to be able to connect and to share. A space that felt safe and continued to be safe during a time that was incredibly, incredibly challenging. And so, uh, we also had a part of, uh, the workshops were exploring a book called Elements of Eloquence.

And so, uh, we actually had a sort of pseudo curriculum where every other week we would meet, uh, we would discuss topics within the several chapters that were assigned prior. And then we would write within the scope of that meeting. four topics that were related to the chapters that were assigned. And so, the chapters within that book would describe different aspects of how to write that would sound eloquent and could be described [00:18:00] as examples of eloquence.

And so, as we navigated those different chapters, you know, I was able to learn, not only by myself, but also within the community, how to leverage different aspects of being eloquent in my writing. And so, in that way, you know, I was able to connect. And find community in a way that wasn't possible prior to the pandemic.

Um, and another way that I engaged with my community was with open mics. And so, uh, I had actually never heard of what was an open mic before, uh, the pandemic. I, I just heard of it in passing, never really gave it much serious thought. And so, during the pandemic, I, I was curious, you know, what are the

other groups out there that are centered on creativity, whether it's music or poetry.

And so, I found open mics that were out there. That were designed to provide a community for me to share my

poetry and to share what I've written, but also to be able to connect with others and what they've been doing. So, uh, there's a period of time when I was engaged with about 10 or so different open mics every other week, and I would sign in, you know, share my [00:19:00] poetry and then continue to do so in different sessions.

So, I would say that, you know, there's tremendous community that I was able to discover.

Mei: I think those are really cool opportunities and, um, communities you've mentioned. Um, and something that also came to mind while you were talking was, I'm sure

the structure also helped as well, of just having a place where you could go and, You know, they provided like, okay, for 15 minutes, we're going to do some quiet writing time and, um, providing prompts as well. And so just being on, you know, on zoom, I imagine with a bunch of other people all practicing the same prompt for that 15 minutes, I think is so helpful and not.

It can be hard to want to do that by yourself and like set aside that 15 minute time and make up your own prompt to for yourself like that's that's definitely more difficult and, [00:20:00] um, that, yeah, I think like just thinking back to, you know, When I was in undergrad, for example, like classes and lecture provide that structure, that's really helpful for mental health in some ways, obviously not so helpful in other ways for our mental health, but I have to say, like having that accountability to show up and have those other people, people who have those like minded interests as you definitely helps bolster that feeling of community, I feel like, and, um, Definitely improves mental health in certain aspects.

Davy: I would also add, I think, for a time before I was joining these groups, like three or four every single week for this creative writing meetings online, I was actually trying to do my own creative writing as a solo venture. And so I was looking, you know, prompt generators, uh, you know, [00:21:00] different ideas that I could write on.

And for a while, it felt incredibly frustrating because, you know, I Yeah, I was writing, I was expressing myself in the same way as music in terms of understanding who I was through writing. But at the same time, I was missing that broader context of being tied and being involved within a community. And so what was actually tremendously beneficial in those writing groups was that not only were we writing together, we're expressing these ideas in conjunction with each other's experiences, but also being able to share what we wrote towards the end of each of the sessions and also get good, positive feedback from other individuals.

And and possible suggestions for improvement. So it was really that factor of being able to share what I wrote and to hear from others thoughts that allowed me to have that momentum to continue to push forward. And despite any frustrations I may have in writing writer's block, getting stuck in an idea, not being, not knowing how to proceed with a particular thought or particular avenue of approach.

And so I'd say that [00:22:00] particular being able to share with each other, share each other's work. You're right feedback that allowed me to really feel involved in the community that I was not like writing together in this in this zoom space of 10 window 10 images of people that were also writing at the same time.

Um, but more so being able to, you know, connect at the level of hearing feedback really invested in each other.

Mei: Yeah, it sounds like that back and forth was another aspect that really helped you stay committed to the practice. Um, and, and I think it's more fun when other people have input on your work and you can kind of talk through possibly like some writer's block you're having or yeah, I think that it definitely makes sense to me what you're saying.

Emily: Yeah. Yeah. I think that's such an important part of the creative process too, is like having that sense of community and having other people around who are [00:23:00] doing something similar and who you can like. You know, bounce ideas off of and get feedback and like get also like inspiration from other people's work too.

Um, I know like I took, I took like one creative writing class in undergrad. Um, and it was really fun. Like, I think one of my most, like one of my favorite parts about that class I think was just the sense of community. Um, Because, you know, we're all in there together because we want to be creative and we want to,

like, express ourselves, and I think just, like, having those other people around to, you know, I, it's almost like kind of what you were saying earlier, May, like, it's that sense of accountability of, like, yes, like, one, you have to show up to this group, but also, like, Then you're accountable to actually be creative, which sounds a little counterintuitive, but I think it can definitely work and it can definitely be helpful.

Um, and so I'm sure having a group like that, especially during the pandemic was, it seems like that was very beneficial, like [00:24:00] for your mental health and just like your creativity in general. So I think that's great that you were able to find something like that.

Davy: I think creativity absolutely thrives.

Within constructs within the structure within an environment that actually has its limitations, because, you know, within a box, then you can actually think outside the box. And I think that was really the part that allowed me to truly enjoy those groups is being able to have that structure, you know, those week to week meetings and also in the same time have that connection in a way through sort of pseudo zoom.

Emulated connections and be able to, in the course of these meetings, just the same way that friendships and professional connections are built, you know, over those week by week meetings, be able to see, you know, individuals, what their interests are, what they'd like to write about, what they continue to write about, what they're exploring, what they're working on, what they're, what they're deciding to switch away from, and in the process, you know, be able to build those friendships [00:25:00] in a way when You know, there wasn't, you know, many other options to do so to, to find that community.

Emily: I really like what you said about, you know, the, you have to be in a box to think outside of a box. I think that's, that's a great, like, that's a great quote. I feel like

Mei: I agree.

Davy: I may or may not have just made that up. So

Mei: I liked it. I was like, Oh, and that's going on the marketing page.

Um, so we've talked about, you know, finding community and ways, um, to express yourself creatively during the pandemic when we were all in quarantine.

Um, but since the pandemic, you know, now that things have, you know, become more in person for most people, um, how have you been able to join in person communities geared towards music or, uh, creative writing?[00:26:00]

Yeah, absolutely. So, you know, for a period of time with the pandemic, all my engagements were solely virtual. There's no other option to do so. And as time went on, some of those migrated to more of a hybrid platform and then eventually in the past year or so, uh, fully back in person. And so my transition sort of finding those in person communities that were geared towards music or just creativity in general, sort of riding that Transitional shift from virtual to hybrid and back into the person.

So, I'm actually quite fortunate that the area that I live in in South Florida has a lot of cultural opportunities that exist. We have a robust set of museums that always have different events going on every week. And so, a lot of that was really being involved in my community. You know, going to those museums, engaging with those events.

Uh, we have what's called the Norton Museum in my area. And they have Uh, Friday nights, uh, I think it's called After Dark, and so they bring in different artists, different [00:27:00] musicians, different creative, uh, ventures, and so they provide a space within the community for people to connect, and to draw together, to paint together, and to enjoy music together, so, um, at least several of the local museums have drum circles every now and then, so they bring in a local artist who has all these African drums, and we just sit around and tap on the drums and create these different beats, In accordance to sort of the culture and the leading framework from the artist.

And so one of the other organizations that I was part of was called the NeuroArts Collaborative. So this collaborative is actually an exploratory venture into how neuroscience and the arts are really hand in hand that they're not that much different than the arts really impacts how well the brain is in addition to how much neuroscience research can be done to prove that the art actually affects the brain. So NeuroArts, uh, that collaborative, uh, was initially during the pandemic, pandemic meeting solely virtually. Uh, so it was [00:28:00] this, uh, Zoom meeting, I think every other month or every two months or so, that would meet and it'd be, 40 or so people that are all online on this zoom call.

And so as the pandemic progressed and things got better, uh, there became sort of a hybrid shift. And so some of those meetings were actually in person at a reception done in the theater and brought in different speakers. And so I was

able to ride this shift, you know, from virtual to hybrid and then back to in person, uh, through the existing commitments that I had, uh, organizations that I had already been a part of through those weekly zoom meetings.

I would also say I've been involved with, Uh, local creative mornings chapters.

So, uh, creative mornings is an international organization that does presentations for free in the community every once a week on the first Friday of each month, and they have these different presentations about creativity and that also have a free breakfast, who doesn't like free coffee and free pickles and food.

And so they would have these presentations every month, [00:29:00] and I would go to them and be immersed in the community of fellow creatives, be able to talk about my music and my art and connect with them. Other individuals. And so, uh, in that way, you know, with those different organizations, those different events, I was able to sort of ride, like I said, that transition from virtual.

The hybrid and so back into inflation. That's great. Yeah, I like

Emily: that you were able to stick with those communities too, like throughout the pandemic, all the way up until now I think that's great and I feel like that really shows that, you know, they had a big impact on you and, and that you found a real sense of connection through those communities.

Um, but yeah, I, I think that's great that you were able to, like, find all those resources to, like, in your community that, you know, a lot of them seems like they're free or they're just like, you know, really geared towards, like, the public.

So I guess like, in what ways do you think creative communities and especially those catered towards like special interests. [00:30:00] Um, in what ways do you think those can have a positive impact on someone's mental health? And also, do you have any tips for our listeners, um, who might want to get involved with creative or music focused communities, but they don't really know where to start?

Davy: Yeah, absolutely.

I think a lot of times creative communities offer, you know, a number of different benefits depending on what the individual is like. Uh, and a lot of

times, you know, I find a lot of Benefit through having a sense of belonging, being part of a community in which the, at least one of the common denominators among all of us there, is that we are creative.

Whether that's the arts, music, painting, drawing. Uh, whatever that may take or origami for that matter. So being involved in having that sense of belonging, I think it's absolutely important that sense of belonging can be manifested, developed in a number, providing a space for people to share or to express their interests, collaborate together, work on art together or work on different ideas together.

So I would say [00:31:00] that. And then in addition to that, I think emotional expression is an absolutely essential part. And sometimes that expression can take a number of different forms. It can be through music, it can be through drawing or Uh, just simply the written word. And so providing spaces in which emotional expression can be, uh, manifested is so important.

So, uh, emotional expression. And then I also say, uh, stress reduction. I think a lot of the reasons why people engage in communities that they want to get away from the stress of their day to day life, their work, anything else that's going on in their mind, their family. So having a space where people can de stress and feel not stressed is truly important.

Um, and I would say lastly, I think cognitive benefits. I think being able to learn from other people, you know, how they approach music, how they approach the arts can be tremendously important to be able to learn about options that I probably wouldn't have explored or learned about online. So that is also probably important and also [00:32:00] helping later on through the arts and through creative approaches too.

Increase levels of concentration and focus on work that really is important to the individual. So, um, in addition to those benefits, I would say that in finding events, you definitely check out your local Facebook page events as well as event. Right. I think that's a lot of ways that I found those open mics, those writing workshops and opportunities.

And I think for in person events, I think there's a lot of opportunity to volunteer. Reach out to your local creative organization, local libraries, community centers, and ask. can I you know, stop by, volunteer an hour or two a month, and I think in that way, at least for me with Creative Mornings, I was able to meet a lot of fellow creatives and to connect with them in a space that I otherwise would not have.

So, um, that's also a great avenue of approach. And I would also say that a lot of credit card organizations, I know Bank of America offers free admission, I think on the first full weekend of every month for [00:33:00] a lot of museums nationwide, so there's always an opportunity to use that. And Uh, get connected with your local museum.

I know some museums also offer, you know, tremendous discounts for student membership or just, you know, young adult membership. So that's always a great approach.

Mei: Yeah, those are some great tips. I, I have to say heavy emphasis on take advantage of any free perks, um, your student ID can get you if you're in school, uh, because now that I'm not, I definitely miss having those perks. I miss free admission to the Museum of Fine Arts here in Boston.

There's not a day that goes by where I don't miss that.

Emily: Yeah, that's definitely very helpful. And I think, I don't know. I mean, not like every school is like this, but I know for some certain schools, you can use your student ID a little bit after you graduate too. So. You can always try it. Don't tell them I told you but Just a pro tip.[00:34:00]

Davy: I may or may not cannot confirm or deny, but I have Or I possibly have not used that methodology. Sometimes it works.

Mei: Cannot confirm nor deny, and we are not endorsing you do so.

Emily: But, yeah, those tips are really great. Thank you, Davy, for sharing that. Um, yeah, it's been really fun talking to you and hearing all about your creative endeavors.

Mei: Definitely very inspiring hearing you talk about how involved you've become in your community and all the different creative outlets you have.

I think that's something a lot of people who are post grad really miss out in, in their life. Cause like, I think when we're kids, it's just, it's a lot easier to have those sorts of hobbies and really get to express yourself creatively.

Cause like you said, there are so many benefits to, um, being creative and the [00:35:00] learning that comes alongside that, the, um, the stress relief, um, gaining friendships, gaining more connections, possibly leading you to other

creative outlets. Like there's just so many benefits that you mentioned, which are truly wonderful.

Davy: I would also add, I think there are many very low barriers to using creativity. I think There's many, you know, big cities or local cities nationwide that have, you know, a cultural council or a cultural organization, and they typically keep a very active directory of what's happening locally in terms of the arts, in terms of creativity.

And so, uh, that's always an easy way to approach. I think local libraries are often underestimated for how much opportunity they can provide for creativity, and they also say that that is also another avenue approach. And if. If worse comes to worse and in person isn't available, there's tons of open mics that are, uh, open and are ongoing online.

There's a lot of creative writing groups that [00:36:00] are available that are run on Zoom. So whether it's in person or online, there's always options to explore creativity and to be involved. You don't need an instrument. You don't need, you know, formal musical education. You know, you just need a desire and persistence to be able to find and locate the groups that are right for you.

Emily: Yeah, yeah, I will say, as a former librarian, your local library probably has a lot more creative, like, events and groups than you would expect. So definitely check that out.

Um, I feel like it's often overlooked, but it's, it's there if you look for it. And, yeah. Yeah. And I, I like what you mentioned too about, you know, if the first couple of groups that you check out, aren't your thing, then that's okay. You can keep trying new ones. Um, I'm sure it's easy to get like discouraged if you go to one and it just doesn't really feel like it clicks, but there are so many out there and you can definitely find one that, that resonates with you and inform a community that way.

So yeah, I think that's a really good tip.

Mei: Yeah, that that is a great point. Thank you. [00:37:00] If you would like to contact us, you can email us at staytuned at umassmed. edu and check out the transitions ACR website at umassmed. edu slash transitions ACR. Thanks for being here and be sure to stay tuned for next time.