

BMPF 7010 - Module 6

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Integrating “A Voice Becoming...” into the lived experiences of working artists: A feasibility study of well-being interventions for independent, early-stage female singer-songwriters.

Table of Contents:

PROJECT PROPOSAL	3
PROJECT REPORT:	7
Introduction	7
Literature Review	9
Methodology	15
Findings	20
• Recruitment and Retention	21
• Adherence and Completion	22
• Burden and Practicality	25
• Integration into Everyday Life	29
• Individual Practices	31
○ Breathwork	32
○ Gratitude Journaling	33
○ Self-Compassion Exercises	35
○ Reflective Prompts	36
○ Sung Affirmations	37
▪ Summary of Individual Practices	39
• Acceptability and Appropriateness	39
• Perceived Effectiveness	43
• Synthesis of Findings	47
○ The Tension Between Intention and Capacity	47
○ Supporting Engagement with an Integrated Intervention	48
○ Reclaiming Creative Practices for Personal Well-Being	48
• Refinement and Future Implementation	49
Conclusions and Recommendations	50
REFERENCES	53

APPENDICES

Appendix 1:	Ethics Form	62
Appendix 2:	Project Information Sheet for Participants	93
Appendix 3:	Participant Consent Forms	95
Appendix 4:	Permission Letter	105
Appendix 5:	“A Voice Becoming...” 2-week program	106
Appendix 6:	Pre-Program Questionnaire	134
Appendix 7:	Post-Program Questionnaire	137
Appendix 8:	Post-Program Interview Questions	141
Appendix 9:	Pre- and Post-Program Questionnaire Responses and Analysis (Excel Zipped File)	143
Appendix 10:	Coded Transcription of Post-Program Interviews	144
Appendix 11:	Consolidated Interview Coding	188
Appendix 12:	Development of Final Themes	190

I. PROJECT PROPOSAL

Context and Justification

This work-based study will take place within my professional practice as a private voice teacher for early-stage independent female singer-songwriters. Although vocal development is central to my work, my experience shows that emerging female artists often face challenges beyond technical skill development. Many of the women I work with must navigate creative uncertainty, self-doubt, performance pressure, comparison, rejection, financial insecurity, and the demands of developing a professional identity in a highly competitive and unpredictable industry. These systemic industry pressures adversely affect artists' psychological well-being, and academic research increasingly reports high levels of anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and burnout, particularly among women (Gross & Musgrave, 2020; Musgrave, 2023; Musgrave & Gross, 2025; Musgrave et al., 2025; Musgrave & Lamis, 2025; Kenny et al., 2014; Vaag et al., 2016). Gross & Musgrave (2020) argue that the solution lies in alleviating the music industry's systemic pressures through government legislation and changes in business practices. While I agree to some extent, change of that magnitude is often slow and not guaranteed. I am unsatisfied with watching my clients suffer in the meantime when evidence-based well-being solutions could ease their stress and emotional dysregulation.

This wider context is relevant to my practice because the artists I work with are not only developing their voices but also their identities and careers as creative professionals. My previous research found limited evidence for practical, "affordable and accessible" artist-specific well-being interventions for independent female singer-songwriters (Visser et al., 2022; Berg et al., 2018). While voice teaching is *not* mental health care and I am not a therapist, I believe it's valuable to recognize how an artist's physical, emotional, and creative experiences can intersect. Drawing on this understanding and the gap identified in that research, I developed "**A Voice Becoming... Creating Artistic Authenticity through Resilience, Self-Awareness, Self-Compassion and Gratitude,**" a two-week well-being journaling program designed specifically for independent female singer-songwriters. The program combines short, simple, evidence-informed psychological and embodied practices that can support emotional regulation, reduce anxiety, and improve well-being. It includes breathwork, gratitude journaling, self-compassion exercises, and sung affirmations (Knowles et al., 2026; Little et al., 2026; Sun et al., 2023; Tan et al., 2023; Neff, 2003; Neff & Tirch, 2013; Bock et al., 2025), grounded in findings from the positive psychology movement and supported by Fredrickson's Broaden and Build Theory (Fredrickson 2001; 2025).

It was intended to be accessible and affordable, giving artists opportunities to develop greater awareness of their experiences, build resilience, and cultivate a more positive, connected relationship with themselves, their voices, and their creativity.

This study seeks to understand whether this accessible, low-cost, evidence-based well-being program can potentially help female artists regulate emotions, reduce stress, and build resilience while we “wait” for the industry to change. By examining the program’s feasibility, acceptability, and usefulness, this study seeks to determine whether combining breathwork, gratitude journaling, self-awareness, self-compassion, and affirmation setting can support well-being and foster artistic authenticity among the working artists for whom the program was specifically designed, and whether it can be meaningfully integrated into their everyday lives.

Intended Impact

Although research supports each well-being practice in “A Voice Becoming...”, the program may not be helpful or meaningful to participants. I don’t know how artists will experience the practices in this sequence and format. Some may be valuable; others may not resonate or need redevelopment.

By examining participants’ program engagement, I hope they will notice changes in their perceived emotional regulation, stress, and overall well-being, and whether, as a result, they reflect differently on their relationship with themselves, their voices, and their creative lives. Participants will not necessarily have the same experience, and understanding these differences will be an important part of the study.

As a small-scale practitioner research project, this study will not establish clinical efficacy or make broad claims about mental health outcomes. Instead, it will explore participants’ experiences of the program, including perceived benefits and challenges. Findings will help me evaluate and improve the program, guide how I integrate well-being practices into my work as a voice teacher educator and vocal coach, and provide actionable insights to better support artists—rather than relying on my assumptions about the program’s value. The study is timely given musicians’ escalating mental health challenges and the need for preventive approaches.

In the longer term, this study may contribute to understanding how voice teachers and artist-development practitioners might support artists as whole people while remaining mindful of the boundaries of their professional roles. I hope it generates knowledge relevant to performers and creatives in other genres, as well as to other voice teachers and researchers.

Outlined Intention and Proposed Methods

Drawing on a relativist ontology and a pragmatic epistemological view, this study will adopt a qualitative, multimodal practitioner-research approach to evaluate the feasibility, accessibility, acceptability, and perceived effectiveness of “A Voice Becoming...”. The project will begin by recruiting 8-10 independent or early-stage female singer-songwriter participants aged 18 or older. These singer-songwriters may be signed to a publishing agreement but not to a record deal. After receiving the study information sheet and providing their signed consent form, they will complete pre-intervention data collection via a questionnaire with both closed- and open-ended questions to obtain the most representative picture (Costley et al., 2010). Participants will then engage with the “A Voice Becoming...” program for two weeks. After the two weeks conclude, they will complete a post-intervention questionnaire with roughly the same questions as the pre-intervention questionnaire, along with a recorded formal interview with open-ended questions. I will also conduct a literature review and take observational and reflective field notes as a practitioner-researcher; these observations may provide insight into participants’ experiences and the program’s practical delivery.

I chose a qualitative approach because the study aims to explore rich, complex lived experiences. I am interested in how participants describe their experiences, the benefits they perceive, the challenges they encounter, and the meaning they attribute to the program in their own words. Thematic analysis will identify patterns and themes across the qualitative data.

The questionnaires may also provide sufficient data to support descriptive quantitative analyses that complement the qualitative findings. However, participants’ qualitative experiences will remain central to the study. The final stages of the project will involve analyzing the data, coding it into themes, reflecting on the findings, and making recommendations for the program’s future development and delivery.

A multimodal approach is appropriate because it will allow real-time audio recording via Zoom, as well as artists’ examples of affirmations from their interaction with the program, enabling concurrent data collection through interviews and field notes.

Ethics and Insider Research

Ethical considerations are important because participants will be invited to reflect on their well-being and personal experiences. Although “A Voice Becoming...” incorporates practices intended

to support reflection and well-being, it is not a therapeutic or clinical intervention. This distinction will be clearly communicated to participants.

Participation will be voluntary and non-coercive, and the research will begin only after ethical approval. Participants will receive clear information about the project and provide informed consent before taking part. They will be informed of their right to withdraw in accordance with the approved ethical procedures. Questions will remain open and optional to minimize participant discomfort. I will address potential challenges, such as withdrawal or inconsistent engagement, through clear communication, informed consent, and flexible scheduling.

All data will be anonymized and securely stored in accordance with university policy and approved ethical procedures. Participants' identities will be protected throughout the study.

I created "A Voice Becoming..." and therefore have a personal investment in the program. As a creator/practitioner/researcher, I must consider my position as an insider-researcher. Some participants may already have professional relationships with me. Familiarity and trust may help participants feel comfortable sharing their experiences; however, these relationships may also create a risk that participants tell me what they think I want to hear rather than provide honest feedback (Gray, 2014). Therefore, I need to carefully consider the questions I ask, how I interpret participants' responses, and the conclusions I draw, so I can remain aware of my own assumptions and expectations and engage in ongoing reflection throughout the research process (Walliman, 2001; Kumar, 2005).

Expected Personal Learning Outcomes

Through this project, I hope to develop my skills in designing, conducting, and evaluating a qualitative, practitioner-led study in my studio. I am especially interested in using multiple qualitative data sources to evaluate a resource I created.

I aim to reflect on my practice and learn from participants, deepening my understanding of integrating evidence-informed psychological and embodied approaches into voice teaching. I also seek to clarify the opportunities and limits of supporting artists' well-being in my role. Their perspectives will identify the strengths and limitations of "A Voice Becoming..." and inform its future development.

II. PROJECT REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Music and singing are increasingly recognized as supporting psychological and social well-being, with studies linking participation to mood, emotional regulation, and overall well-being (Fancourt et al., 2016; Fancourt & Finn, 2019; Fancourt et al., 2019; Fancourt et al., 2026). Fancourt notes that “from an anthropological perspective, theories suggest the arts emerged and co-evolved largely as part of human healing practices, and in many societies they are still intrinsically interwoven with health practices” (Fancourt, 2026). However, recreational music’s potential benefits contrast sharply with professional musicians’ experiences. Female musicians report higher rates of anxiety, depression, stress, burnout, substance abuse, and suicidal ideation than the general population, suggesting that music may promote well-being while also creating substantial psychological strain professionally (Kenny et al., 2014; Vaag et al., 2016; Musgrave, 2023; Musgrave & Lamis, 2025).

In my Module 4 project, I explored the factors that created significant changes in the music industry, including vertical integration, industry consolidation, disruptive technologies, and the digitization of music (Bishop, 2005; Graham et al., 2004; Nakano and Fleury, 2017 cited in Pizzolitto, 2024; Urbinati et al., 2019; Waldfogel, 2012; Koh et al., 2019; Kenney & Zysman, 2016; Arditi, 2017), as well as society’s failure to recognize music as a professional practice (Musgrave, 2023; Frederickson & Rooney, 1990). I also examined how these factors drove economic shifts over the past 30 years, creating the music industry’s current oligopolistic structure (Pizzolitto, 2023) and contributing to independent female singer-songwriters’ poor mental health through income instability, financial precarity, gender inequality and discrimination, appearance-based scrutiny, isolation, and limited support networks (Gross & Musgrave, 2020; Musgrave, 2023; Musgrave et al., 2025). As a research-practitioner with a private voice studio in Nashville, TN, I’ve seen how these pressures affect artists’ psychological well-being, confidence, creativity, and relationship with their voices.

Through my Module 5 research, I was bothered by the paradox between knowing that music can support well-being (Clift et al., 2010, 7; Clift & Morrison, 2011; Coulton et al., 2015; Williams et al., 2018; Ploukou & Panagopoulou, 2018; Fancourt, 2026) and the fact that a professional music career can also be a significant psychological strain (Musgrave, 2023; Musgrave & Lamis, 2025). I identified a gap in the literature, namely limited evidence for “affordable and accessible” artist-specific well-being interventions for independent female singer-songwriters (Visser et al., 2022;

Berg et al., 2018). I sought to intentionally create a small, accessible well-being practice within the artist's relationship with their own voice and creativity, much like Julia Cameron's "The Artist's Way" (Cameron, 1992). I then researched and developed **"A Voice Becoming... Creating Artistic Authenticity through Resilience, Self-Awareness, Self-Compassion and Gratitude"**, a two-week journaling program that integrates evidence-based well-being practices, including breathwork, gratitude journaling, self-compassion exercises, and sung affirmations, to reduce anxiety and stress, support emotional regulation, and enhance well-being in this population (Knowles et al., 2026; Little et al., 2026; Sun et al., 2023; Tan et al., 2023; Neff, 2003; Neff & Tirch, 2013; Bock et al., 2025). It was specifically designed to be low-cost and accessible, to help artists build resilience, and to foster a positive relationship with their own creativity. It was intended as a well-being resource rather than a therapeutic or clinical intervention.

Although research supports individual well-being practices, including breathwork, self-compassion, gratitude, and other positive psychology approaches (Wu et al., 2024; Zaccaro et al., 2018; Knowles et al., 2026; Little et al., 2026; Liu et al., 2024; Sun et al., 2023; Tan et al., 2023; Neff, 2003; Neff & Tirch, 2013; Zessin et al., 2015; Bock et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2025), little is known about combining them into a brief program suited to artists' everyday creative lives. The program sequences emotional regulation, gratitude, self-reflection, and self-compassion to foster positive mindsets and self-awareness, then concludes with sung affirmations expressing intentions for self-love and self-belief. However, evidence for individual practices does not establish whether this combined program will be acceptable, engaging, or feasible for artists.

My aims and objectives for this project are as follows:

Research Aims

This study does not aim to establish the program's clinical efficacy. Instead, it explores whether "A Voice Becoming..." is feasible, acceptable, and potentially useful for its intended population. Specifically, it examines whether integrating breathwork, gratitude journaling, self-compassion exercises, reflective practice, and sung affirmations into voice teaching can potentially support emotional regulation, resilience, and well-being. It also explores participants' perceptions of the program, their adherence, which elements they find helpful or less helpful, practical delivery challenges, and whether this type of intervention is perceived as meaningful and relevant.

Research Objectives

The study will:

- Implement “A Voice Becoming...” with a group of independent and early-stage female singer-songwriters;
- Evaluate participants’ experiences, engagement, and adherence to the two-week program;
- Explore participants’ perceived impact of the program on emotional regulation, self-compassion, stress, resilience, and overall well-being;
- Identify strengths, weaknesses, and practical challenges associated with implementing the program to this population;
- Generate recommendations for refining the program;

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research increasingly documents professional musicians’ psychological and occupational challenges, including elevated anxiety, depression, stress, and other poor well-being outcomes (Vaag et al., 2016, 2021; Visser et al., 2021; Gross & Musgrave, 2020; Musgrave, 2023a; Musgrave, 2023b; Musgrave et al., 2024; Musgrave et al., 2025; Musgrave & Lamis, 2025). Yet identifying this need does not establish how to address it effectively. This is especially relevant for early-stage and independent female singer-songwriters, whose careers demand more than writing, recording, and performing. They often take on multiple roles: marketing and branding across social media, managing tours and performances, creating and selling merchandise, and handling promotional design and public relations (Thomson, 2013; Schwetter, 2016; Eiriz and Leite 2017). Without record-label, booking-agent, or management support, many also hold part-time jobs for additional income (Thomson, 2013). These demands intersect with persistent gender inequalities, including unequal exposure and resulting pay gaps (LaFrance et al., 2018; Cannizzo et al., 2025), greater scrutiny of appearance (Cannizzo et al., 2025), and burnout from difficulty separating personal and musical identities (Ascensio et al., 2017; Perrier et al., 2025). The resulting combination of creative, professional, financial, and gender-specific pressures may not only contribute to psychological strain, but also severely limit the time and resources available for engaging in practices intended to support well-being. The question is not only whether independent female singer-songwriters may benefit from preventative well-being interventions,

but what forms of support are acceptable, relevant, and realistically sustainable within the circumstances of their everyday working lives.

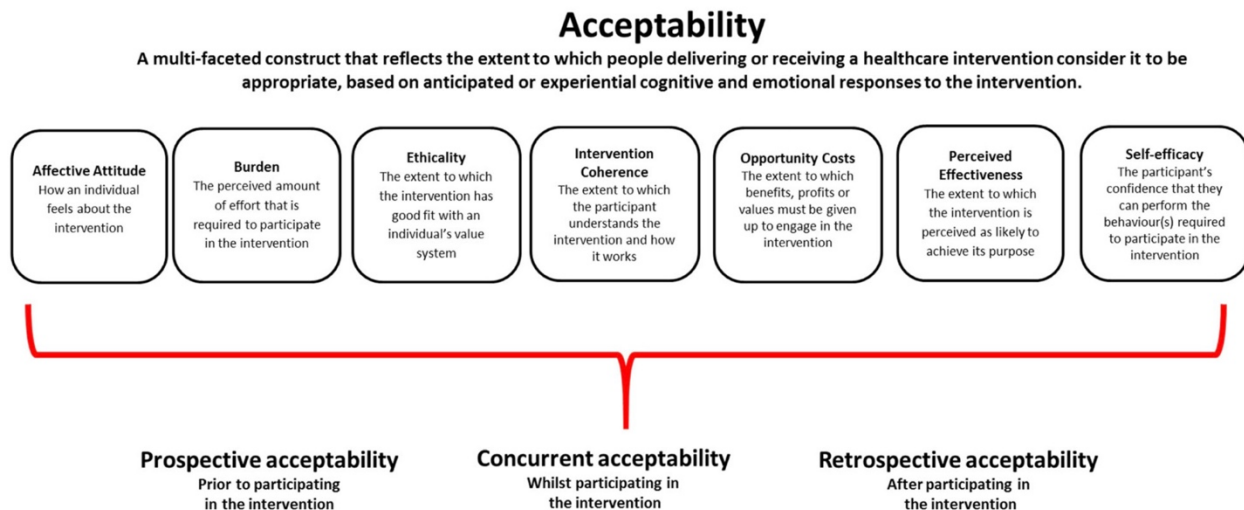
This presents a key challenge in developing interventions for this population. Evidence of musicians' poor well-being shows support is needed, but beyond "affordable and accessible" and "artist-specific" (Visser et al., 2022; Berg et al., 2018), it does not clarify what support should entail or whether artists can fit it into busy lives. Factors contributing to stress and burnout may also hinder participation. Artists balancing career demands may value mental well-being but struggle to make time for it. Thus, an intervention's practical demands help determine its effectiveness.

"A Voice Becoming..."

"A Voice Becoming..." was created for independent female singer-songwriters and combines breathwork (Zaccaro et al., 2018; Laborde et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2026), gratitude journaling (Cheng et al., 2015; Komase et al., 2021; Valikhani et al., 2019; Bock et al., 2025), self-compassion exercises, reflective prompts (Kaur et al., 2025), and sung affirmations (Daykin et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2025; Fancourt et al., 2019; Juntunen et al., 2023; Murphey, 2014; Zessin et al., 2015; Perry et al., 2022; Ionescu et al., 2025) to support emotional regulation, resilience, and self-awareness (Lambert et al., 2009; Jeliseh et al., 2025; Bock et al., 2025). The program draws on emotional regulation theory (Ionescu et al., 2025; McRae & Gross, 2020; Wang et al., 2025), embodiment (Liu, Z. et al., 2025), interoception theory (Ehmann et al., 2025; Eslinger et al., 2021; Hanely et al., 2017; Cameron, 2001; Quigley et al., 2021), positive psychology (Seligman, 2002; Rana, 2015; Gable & Haidt, 2005), and in particular, the Broaden and Build theory (Isik & Erguner-Tekinalp, 2017; Jeliseh et al., 2025), and self-compassion theory (Neff, 2003; Neff et al., 2005; Neff & McGehee, 2010; Neff et al. 2008, as cited in Neff, 2011; Rogers, 2025; Bock et al., 2025). While many of these practices are traditionally researched and explored independently, this program brings them together into a creative daily practice that combines cognitive strategies, such as reflection and reframing, with embodied approaches involving breath, bodily awareness, and voice. It was meant to be affordable, accessible, and manageable for busy artists as a practical well-being tool that could also be incorporated into a private voice teaching practice. While research supports the program's individual evidence-based components, I could not find any studies that combined all of them into a single intervention. Therefore, I am testing the feasibility of this program in this study.

Feasibility Studies

Feasibility studies are essential early steps in developing complex interventions. They assess “whether the study can be done” by examining processes rather than definitive outcomes (O’Cathain et al., 2015; Bowen et al., 2009; Skivington et al., 2021; Orsmond & Cohn, 2015; Arain et al., 2010). Adaptive methods evaluate recruitment, data collection, acceptability, resource adequacy, and preliminary participant responses (Orsmond & Cohn, 2015; O’Cathain et al., 2015). Qualitative research illuminates personal experiences and context (O’Cathain et al., 2015; Moore et al., 2015; Bowen et al., 2009). The Theoretical Framework of Acceptability (TFA) helps assess participants’ views and perceived burdens (Sekhon et al., 2017). Clear, detailed reporting of qualitative findings and lessons learned supports effective research (O’Cathain et al., 2015; O’Brien et al., 2014; Moore et al., 2015; Bowen et al., 2009).



(Figure 1. Theoretical Framework of Acceptability (TFA) from Sekhon et. al., 2017)

Feasibility and Acceptability

Bowen et al. (2009) note that feasibility studies are valuable when an intervention is developing, and questions remain about its real-world use. Their framework covers eight areas: acceptability, demand, implementation, practicality, adaptation, integration, expansion, and limited-efficacy testing. For “A Voice Becoming...”, acceptability, implementation, and practicality are especially relevant. Even theoretically sound, evidence-informed interventions may place demands on participants that hinder sustained engagement. Feasibility assessment must therefore consider the circumstances in which participants will use the intervention.

O’Cathain et al. (2015) argue that qualitative research strengthens feasibility studies by revealing intervention issues that outcome or completion data miss. Participant experiences can identify problems with content, delivery, or engagement and guide revisions before further evaluation. For “A Voice Becoming...,” adherence alone cannot explain engagement. A participant may miss days because work, performance, travel, or other professional obligations prevent completion—not because she finds the intervention unhelpful. Thus, the same number of completed days can have very different contexts and implications.

Acceptability and Participant Experience

Acceptability involves more than whether participants enjoy an intervention. Sekhon et al. (2017) noted inconsistent definitions and assessments and developed the Theoretical Framework of Acceptability (TFA) to deepen understanding (see **Figure 1**). It identifies seven dimensions: affective attitude, burden, perceived effectiveness, ethicality, intervention coherence, opportunity costs, and self-efficacy. This broader perspective is especially relevant to interventions for artists whose time and resources may already be limited.

Burden and opportunity cost have clear implications for “A Voice Becoming...”. The program requires about 30 minutes of daily activity for two weeks. Though modest, this commitment may compete with an independent artist’s work, songwriting, rehearsal, promotion, or personal responsibilities. Feasibility depends not just on the time required, but on how that demand fits into participants’ lives.

Intervention coherence and perceived effectiveness also matter (Sekhon et al., 2017). “A Voice Becoming...” combines breathwork, gratitude journaling, reflection, self-compassion exercises, and sung affirmations, chosen for evidence of potential well-being benefits. Yet evidence for individual practices does not show that participants will accept them as a combined program. Some elements may feel relevant, others less meaningful; participants may also value an activity but struggle with its frequency or duration. Acceptability therefore depends on both responses to the content and the practical experience of completing the intervention.

Engagement, Adherence and Participation

The distinction between intervention content and participant experience also shapes how adherence should be interpreted. Moore et al. (2015) emphasize the importance of examining implementation and context when evaluating complex interventions because outcomes cannot be understood without considering what was delivered, how participants interacted with it, and the

circumstances surrounding participation. Although “A Voice Becoming...” is a relatively brief intervention, the same principle applies. Completion data can indicate engagement, but participant accounts are needed to understand it more specifically.

For example, reduced participation in week two may mean the program is too long, activities feel repetitive, or motivation wanes. It may also reflect unrelated work schedules or performance commitments. High engagement, meanwhile, doesn’t mean every aspect is acceptable: participants may complete activities out of research commitment yet suggest changes to make the program more useful beyond the study.

O’Cathain et al. (2015) identify “exploring barriers and facilitators” as a key contribution of qualitative feasibility research. Understanding what enables participation is as valuable as identifying obstacles. Participants may find that “A Voice Becoming...” provides routine, certain exercises sustain engagement, or the links among well-being, singing, and creative affirmation writing make the program personally relevant. They may also need greater flexibility in when or how they complete activities. These insights reveal what adherence percentages alone cannot.

Context and Intervention Development

More recent research guiding complex interventions has placed even greater emphasis on context. Skivington et al. (2021) argue that interventions interact with the systems in which they are introduced, and that context should therefore be considered throughout development, feasibility, evaluation, and implementation. This perspective is especially useful for “A Voice Becoming...” because the program doesn’t take place in a one-size-fits-all environment: each participant brings her own schedule, finances, artistic identity, experience with well-being practices, and responsibilities.

Feasibility research should not prove the original design “correct,” but examine how it fits the lived experiences of the women it was designed for (Dobkin, 2009, as cited in Osmond & Cohn, 2015; Bowen et al., 2009). O’Cathain et al. (2019) likewise stress incorporating intended users’ perspectives during intervention development. Research can guide intervention components, while engagement with the target population can expose assumptions and identify needed changes before further evaluation. This is relevant for “A Voice Becoming...” because its individual well-being practices were strategically sequenced and intentionally connected with experiences familiar to singer-songwriters. Breathwork is already related to vocal technique, while sung affirmations use the songwriter’s “voice” and the voice itself as part of the intervention. This may increase the program’s perceived relevance, but that cannot be assumed simply

because “A Voice Becoming...” was designed specifically for singer-songwriters. Participant experience is necessary to determine whether these connections are meaningful in practice.

The same principle applies to the program’s other well-being practices. Gratitude journaling, self-compassion exercises, and reflective practice are evidence-based and research-supported, but participants may respond to them differently when asked to engage with them as part of a structured daily program. Some activities may be particularly useful, while others may feel repetitive, uncomfortable, or even triggering. However, these findings shouldn’t necessarily be interpreted as evidence that the program has failed. Critical feedback can identify where refinement and further developments are needed.

An Intervention Gap and the Development of “A Voice Becoming...”

Taken together, the literature reveals a gap between understanding the well-being challenges musicians face and knowing how to provide support that realistically fits within the lives of independent female singer-songwriters. Existing research shows substantial need within these populations and provides evidence for many of the individual practices incorporated into “A Voice Becoming...”. However, evidence supporting a collection of individual practices does not establish that those practices will form a feasible and acceptable intervention program when combined and delivered to a particular population.

“A Voice Becoming...” attempts to bridge this gap by bringing evidence-informed well-being practices together in a brief program developed specifically for independent early-stage female singer-songwriters. However, at this stage, “A Voice Becoming...” should be understood as an intervention in development rather than a completed program with established effectiveness. Its two-week duration, daily thirty-minute commitment, combination of activities, and delivery method all require further examination in practice.

Skivington et al. (2021) caution against treating intervention development as a simple linear process from design to evaluation. Instead, development, feasibility, evaluation, and implementation can inform one another as understanding of the intervention and its context deepens. This underscores the need to examine participants’ experiences before making broader claims about the effectiveness of “A Voice Becoming....”.

This study therefore seeks to determine whether “A Voice Becoming...” can be realistically implemented. It examines how the program fits participants’ lives, what supports or hinders engagement, how they experience its burden and relevance, which components they find useful,

and what changes may be needed. It also asks what well-being support should look like for this population—not just whether it is needed. Support can be meaningful only if intended users can and will engage with it. For female singer-songwriters balancing creative, professional, and financial pressures, feasibility and acceptability are crucial to making “A Voice Becoming...” relevant, manageable, and sustainable.

METHODOLOGY

This work-based research study is, in many ways, a labor of love aimed at examining whether “A Voice Becoming...” has future potential as a viable well-being intervention for independent early-stage female singer-songwriters. However, before testing efficacy, feasibility should first be established. As mentioned above, a feasibility study primarily addresses whether a planned study or intervention “can be done” by exploring areas of uncertainty and assessing practical issues related to both the research process and the intervention. Feasibility studies can also use an ‘iterative and flexible approach’ which allows an intervention and its methods to be refined before more extensive, larger-scale testing takes place (Bowen et al., 2009; O’Cathain et al., 2015; Orsmond & Cohn, 2015; Skivington et al., 2021).

Although the terms *feasibility study* and *pilot study* are sometimes used interchangeably, they are not necessarily the same thing. A pilot study is generally understood as a smaller version of a future main study and considers whether its different components can work together on a smaller scale. Feasibility research is broader and can take place earlier in the development process, when important questions remain about whether an intervention is practical, acceptable, and appropriate for its intended population (Araín et al., 2010; Orsmond & Cohn, 2015; O’Cathain et al., 2015).

For these reasons, this project was designed as a feasibility study rather than a pilot study. “A Voice Becoming...” is still at an early stage of development, and before moving toward more formal testing, I first wanted to understand whether the program could realistically be completed by independent singer-songwriters, whether they found it acceptable and meaningful, how it fit into their everyday lives, and what might need to be changed. I am not a psychologist, and I am not attempting to demonstrate clinical efficacy. Rather, I am an insider-researcher working within my own professional field as a voice teacher and vocal coach, with a unique position to explore how a well-being intervention developed specifically for singer-songwriters might function within the realities of their lives and work.

Therefore, this study was guided by the following research question:

How can “A Voice Becoming...” be integrated into the lives of independent early-stage female singer-songwriters, and to what extent is it a feasible and acceptable well-being intervention?

Three sub-questions explored this further:

- 1. (Experience) How do participants experience engaging with “A Voice Becoming...”?***
- 2. (Integration) What factors support or hinder the integration of “A Voice Becoming...” into participants’ everyday artistic and professional lives?***
- 3. (Feasibility) To what extent do participants perceive “A Voice Becoming...” as a feasible and acceptable approach to supporting well-being?***

Feasibility was considered through recruitment, retention, adherence, practicality, acceptability, burden, and participants’ experiences of completing the program. The study also explored perceived changes in well-being, though these were considered preliminary signals of potential benefit rather than evidence of effectiveness.

Philosophical Position

This study draws on a relativist ontology and sits within a pragmatic research paradigm. A relativist ontology acknowledges that there may not be one single experience of “A Voice Becoming...”. Participants may experience the same intervention differently depending on their individual circumstances, working patterns, professional demands, and previous experiences (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

From an epistemological perspective, knowledge is pursued using the methods most relevant to the questions asked and best able to provide insight into the research problem (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). This aligns with the pragmatic paradigm, which allows researchers to select methods based on their usefulness in addressing the research question rather than restricting them to a single methodological approach.

A multimodal qualitative research approach was therefore selected, allowing the research question to be explored using methods best suited to addressing the different aspects of feasibility and participants’ experiences (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). While “not all research is well-suited to the inclusion of audio data in the dissemination of research findings,” especially given that voice recognition could remove participants’ anonymity (Chandler et al., 2015), some researchers have

demonstrated instances where video and audio give “voice” to marginalized groups within the broader development of policy (Fahmy & Pemberton, 2012).

Methods

I will conduct a scoping literature review (Grant & Booth, 2009) that is ‘representative’ (Randolph, 2009, p. 6); use pre- and post-intervention questionnaires with both closed- and open-ended questions to capture the most representative picture (Costley et al., 2010); and conduct a recorded, semi-structured interview to elicit participants’ opinions directly (Cohen et al., 2007; Costley et al., 2010). These methods are designed to elicit in-depth information about participants’ experiences before and after the program and to collect adherence data that will provide practical information about whether and how the program was completed, even though collecting data this way is process-oriented and inductive, making the data slower to analyze (Blaxter et al., 2010). Participants may also share examples of their sung affirmations, as King (2008) believes the “visual and auditory systems frequently work together to stimulate cognition” and Chandler et al. (2015) assert that “a multisensory learning approach...invites new opportunities for critical analysis.” Together, these methods are intended to provide a fuller understanding of whether “A Voice Becoming...” could realistically be integrated into the lives of independent singer-songwriters.

Participants and Recruitment

The original plan was to recruit eight to ten independent, early-stage female singer-songwriters aged 18 or older to participate in this study. Five participants were ultimately recruited and completed the research participation requirements. All five are over 18, actively pursuing professional music careers, and not currently signed to a recording contract. None are in a vulnerable group (Gray, 2014).

After UWTSD approved the Ethics Form (**Appendix 1**), participants received a participation information sheet (**Appendix 2**) explaining the purpose of the research, what participation involved, and how their data would be used. Participation was voluntary, responses would be anonymized, and informed consent (**Appendix 3**) was obtained before participation began. I also prepared a letter of permission to conduct the research (**Appendix 4**).

The small sample was intended to support a detailed exploration of participants’ individual experiences rather than to produce findings that could be generalized to a larger population.

However, the small sample size is also acknowledged as a limitation, and the findings should be understood in the context of these five participants.

“A Voice Becoming...” Intervention

Participants completed “A Voice Becoming...” over two weeks. The program was designed to take about 30 minutes per day and featured breathwork, gratitude journaling, self-compassion exercises, reflective journaling prompts, and sung affirmations (**Appendix 5**).

The combination of practices was designed specifically for independent female singer-songwriters and aimed to support emotional regulation, self-compassion, self-awareness, resilience, and overall well-being. Using the singing voice was an important element of the program and distinguished it from more general well-being interventions.

Therefore, the feasibility study examined not only whether participants could complete the program but also how they experienced the individual components, whether those components were meaningful and manageable, and whether they could envision continuing to use them after the study.

Data Collection

A multimodal qualitative approach was used to collect data before, during, and after the intervention. Participants completed a pre-program questionnaire using short answers and a 1-10 Likert scale (**Appendix 6**). Questions addressed stress management, self-compassion, self-criticism, resilience, self-awareness, artistic identity, career anxiety, creative routines, vocal connection, confidence, embodiment, performance confidence, and intentional well-being practices.

Following the intervention, participants completed a post-program questionnaire (**Appendix 7**) that included repeated items from the pre-program questionnaire. This allowed comparison of participants’ self-reported experiences before and after the intervention. These comparisons were not intended to demonstrate effectiveness but to identify possible patterns of perceived change that could be explored further in the interviews.

The post-program questionnaire also addressed feasibility, acceptability, appropriateness, engagement, burden, meaningfulness, and sustainability. Participants evaluated individual components of the program, including breathwork, gratitude journaling, self-compassion exercises, reflective prompts, and sung affirmations, and reported the amount of time required, their level of completion, and which practices they were most likely to continue using.

The primary qualitative method was a semi-structured interview. Qualitative research seeks to understand an individual's perceptions of the world with greater context and complexity, and methods such as structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires are most effective for achieving deeper understanding (Bell & Waters, 2018). Interviews explored participants' overall experience of the program, how it fit into their everyday lives, factors that helped or hindered participation, time and burden, engagement, experiences with individual practices, the use of the singing voice, perceived changes, relevance to their lives as singer-songwriters, and likelihood of continued use (**Appendix 8**).

The semi-structured format provided consistency while allowing unexpected experiences or issues to emerge. Open questions encouraged participants to describe their experiences in their own words rather than directing them toward positive responses.

Feasibility

Feasibility was examined in several ways rather than through a single measure. These included recruitment and retention, completion and adherence, time required to complete the program, integration into everyday life, engagement with individual components, acceptability and appropriateness, perceived burden, meaningfulness and perceived usefulness, intention to continue using the practices, and recommendations for future refinement.

These indicators helped me assess feasibility both in practice and in experience. For example, a participant might complete fewer days because of professional demands, because a particular practice felt uncomfortable, or because the program itself felt burdensome. Interviews allowed me to explore these differences rather than relying on adherence figures alone.

Data Analysis

I compared pre- and post-program questionnaire responses to identify patterns of self-reported change, and used post-program responses to describe feasibility, acceptability, engagement, burden, and experiences of individual components. Because this was a small feasibility study, the questionnaire results were used to identify patterns rather than make claims about the program's effectiveness (**Appendix 9**).

Interview transcripts were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis (2006; 2021). I first became familiar with the data through repeated listening to and reading the transcripts, then coded sections relevant to participants' experiences and the research questions (**Appendix 10**). I compared codes across participants to identify recurring patterns, as well as

important differences and contradictory experiences. I developed these patterns into potential themes, reviewed them against the transcripts, and then refined and defined them.

Although the research questions provided an overall focus on feasibility, acceptability, and integration, I allowed themes to develop from what participants actually reported. Finally, I considered questionnaire and interview findings together, allowing the interviews to provide greater context for patterns identified in the questionnaires.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained before any data collection began. Participants received information about the study and provided informed consent. Participation was voluntary, and participants could withdraw from the study at any time until the data was anonymized, as outlined in the participant information provided to them.

Because I held the dual role of insider researcher-practitioner, I took intentional steps to reduce any sense that participants were expected to respond positively to the program. As a teacher to some of the participants, which was an advantage, I was concerned they might “tell me what I wanted to hear,” so I encouraged them to speak openly about negative experiences, difficulties, and practices they did not find helpful. Data were anonymized and stored securely in accordance with university measures.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

I compared pre- and post-program questionnaire responses to identify patterns of perceived change and explore participants’ experiences of the program, including its feasibility, acceptability, and engagement. The pre-program questionnaire also captured participants’ professional circumstances, existing well-being practices, and the challenges they experienced as independent female singer-songwriters. I examined individual pre- and post- program responses to identify reported changes, as well as post-program ratings of the helpfulness, practicality, and personal meaning of the individual exercises. These comparisons were descriptive and not intended to establish the intervention's effectiveness.

I then analyzed the semi-structured interviews using Braun and Clarke’s reflexive thematic analysis (2006; 2021). I used an initial color-coded framework to organize participants’ experiences related to feasibility, acceptability, perceived effectiveness, and barriers to engagement. Through further comparison and interpretation of the five interviews, I developed

more detailed codes and examined patterns of similarity, difference, and contradiction (**Appendix 11**). This process informed the development of three overarching themes (**Appendix 12**).

I considered the questionnaire and interview findings together to explore not only what participants reported, but also the circumstances that shaped their experiences. The findings are presented in relation to the three research sub-questions, examining how participants experienced the program, what helped or hindered its integration into their everyday lives, and whether they considered it a feasible and acceptable approach to support well-being.

During this process, I coded participants' experiences and identified recurring issues such as completing responsibilities, daily routines, mental capacity, engagement, and the practicality of completing individual exercises. I then looked across the interviews to identify similarities, differences, and sometimes contradictory experiences, using these to develop broader patterns of meaning. By considering the questionnaire and interview findings together, I explored not only what participants reported but also the circumstances that shaped their experiences. The findings are presented in relation to the three research sub-questions, examining how participants experienced the program, what helped or hindered its integration into their everyday lives, and whether they considered it a feasible and acceptable approach to supporting well-being.

Recruitment and Retention

Recruitment and retention were the first considerations when evaluating the feasibility of "A Voice Becoming..." (AVB). I originally intended to recruit eight to ten emerging, early-stage independent female singer-songwriters. Ultimately, I recruited five participants, and all five completed the pre-program questionnaire, post-program questionnaire, and semi-structured interview.

A key reason my recruitment goal fell short was the limited timeframe available for the research. The university approved my ethics form on July 24th, 2026, with an original submission deadline of October 2. This gave me approximately ten weeks to recruit participants, implement the two-week program, collect and analyze data, and complete the paper and presentation. Although UWTSD subsequently granted me an extension to October 15, no additional participants were recruited after October 2. By comparison, most students undertaking this master's research project had approximately eight months to complete their work. However, this truncated timeframe resulted from personal difficulties that arose while I was working toward completing this degree and required considerable time away from my studies. I am immensely grateful to UWTSD and Voice Study Centre for their support.

The recruitment process also offered insight into the practical challenges of participating in a daily well-being program. One prospective participant, an independent singer-songwriter attending an academically demanding university, declined because she could not commit to 30 minutes each day while balancing coursework, songwriting, performances, promotion, and Rhodes Scholarship applications. Although not part of the formal interview dataset, her circumstances reflected challenges identified during coding, particularly among participants who were also college students. I found this particularly relevant because she represented the kind of artist the program was designed to support, raising an important question about whether artists who might benefit from a well-being intervention have the time and capacity to participate.

Despite the smaller sample size, retention was 100%, with all five participants completing the research requirements. This was encouraging, particularly because the study required participants to participate in the two-week AVB program, complete two questionnaires, and participate in an interview. That said, I think it is important to distinguish between retaining participants in the study and their actual adherence to the program: While everyone completed the research requirements, the number of days participants completed the AVB program varied considerably. This suggests that participants could remain committed to contributing to the research even when consistently completing the exercises proved difficult.

Additionally, my position as a practitioner-researcher is also very relevant here. Some participants already knew me through my professional work as a vocal coach, which may have influenced their willingness to participate in the study and remain involved. While these relationships helped make the study possible within the available timeframe, they may have also influenced participants' commitment to the research.

Overall, although I did not achieve my original recruitment goal, I believe the shortened research timeframe was an important limitation. The recruitment process also suggested that the daily time commitment could be a barrier for some artists before participation even began. Future research would benefit from a longer recruitment period and from considering whether a more flexible structure might make the program accessible to a wider range of participants.

Adherence and Completion

A central question of this feasibility study was whether independent female singer-songwriters could complete a two-week well-being program alongside their existing responsibilities.

Completion rates varied. P1 and P5 reported completing all fourteen days, P3 completed thirteen, P4 completed eight, and P2 completed five. Together, participants reported completing 54 of the 70 possible program days, representing approximately 77% of the total.

Participant	Days Completed	Completion Rate
P1	14/14	100%
P2	5/14	35.7%
P3	13/14	92.9%
P4	8/14	57.1%
P5	14/14	100%
Total	54/70	77.1%

However, the number of days completed does not tell the whole story. P3 explained that on particularly demanding days, she sometimes could not engage with the exercises, and she occasionally completed two days' activities on the following day to catch up. She described days with commitments that extended from early morning until late evening, as well as occasions when she "lacked the mental capacity" to participate. Although this meant she did not necessarily complete the exercises on thirteen separate calendar days, her willingness to return to the exercises demonstrated sustained commitment and continued engagement.

It is important to distinguish adherence from engagement and retention. Adherence means completing the prescribed activities, whereas engagement concerns participants' involvement in how they experienced and interacted with those activities (Orsmond & Cohn, 2015). Retention refers to whether participants remained in the study. All five participants were retained, but their adherence and engagement varied.

An interesting pattern emerged when I compared completion rates with participants' circumstances. The three participants focused on building their careers as independent singer-songwriters completed 13 or 14 days, while the two participants who were also college students completed 5 and 8 days. This was particularly interesting because I expected the multiple professional responsibilities of independent artists to make consistent participation difficult. However, in this small group, those focused on building their music careers demonstrated the highest adherence.

P2 managed a demanding academic course load alongside her musical commitments. The AVB program coincided with her midterm exams. As her stress increased, she found it harder to prioritize her well-being:

“As my stress increased, I kind of let things like self-care go.” – P2

P4 was not only balancing academic and musical pursuits but also working part-time in an office and planning her upcoming wedding. She found it easier to complete the exercises during quiet periods at work but struggled to maintain the routine on days when she was not in the office.

I think it is worth noting again that this pattern was evident in recruitment, as another college student declined to participate because she could not accommodate the daily commitment. Notably, P2 is an underclassman, a new transfer to her university, and in her second semester, so she may not have estimated her workload as well as the college student who declined to participate in the study, who is in her final year of school. Their circumstances differed, but both experiences highlighted the potential difficulty of anticipating and managing competing commitments.

The interview coding helped explain these differences in adherence. Participants' accounts repeatedly highlighted competing responsibilities, established routines, mental capacity, and flexibility. P2 and P4 described difficulty finding time for the exercises alongside their academic and other commitments, whereas P1, P3, and P5 identified circumstances or routines that helped them continue. These experiences suggested that adherence depended not only on willingness to engage but also on participants' capacity to integrate the program into their lives. This contributed to one of the overarching themes identified during analysis, namely *the tension between intention and capacity*.

However, with only five participants, it would be inappropriate to conclude that college students generally find the program less feasible than working artists. Rather, they suggest that competing demands, control over one's schedule, and the ability to establish routines may influence adherence.

Another important finding was that lower completion did not necessarily reflect lower enjoyment or perceived relevance. Four participants rated their enjoyment at 10/10, including P4, who completed 8 days. P2 completed only 5 days but still rated the program's relevance to independent female singer-songwriters at 9/10. This may suggest that participants can value the program without completing it consistently, while high adherence did not necessarily mean participation was effortless. The post-program questionnaire also revealed differences in

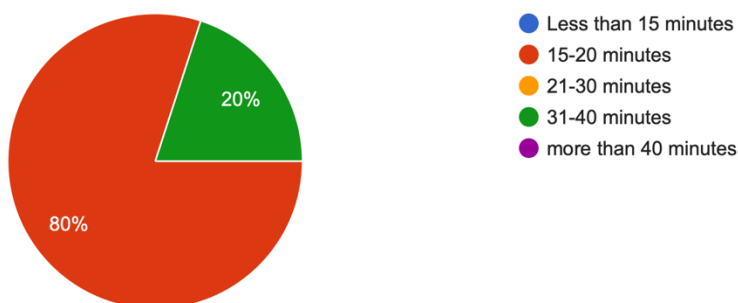
engagement, which ranged from 3/10 to 10/10. These findings reinforced the importance of considering adherence, engagement, and acceptability separately when evaluating feasibility.

Overall, the findings suggest that adherence was shaped by competing responsibilities, mental capacity/fatigue, established routines, and flexibility. P3's experience was particularly informative, because it suggested that allowing participants to catch up after a demanding day may support continued participation without requiring strict daily completion.

Burden and Practicality

Another important consideration was whether AVB placed reasonable demands on participants. The program was designed to take approximately 30 minutes per day over two weeks. Interestingly, four participants reported typically spending 15 to 20 minutes on the exercises, while P5 reported spending 31 to 40 minutes.

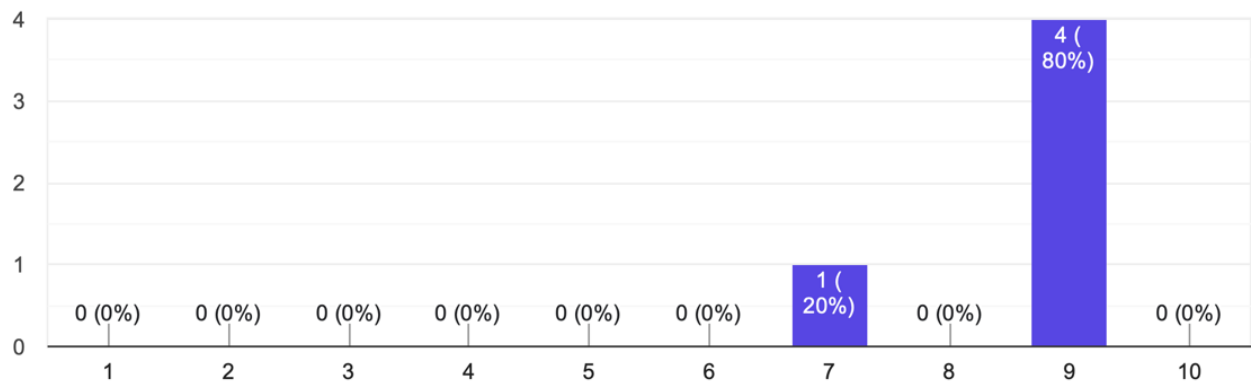
Approximately how much time did you typically spend on the program each day?
5 responses



The two-week duration appeared generally manageable, with all five participants rating it between 7/10 and 9/10. Ratings for the daily time commitment ranged from 5/10 to 10/10. However, responses to whether the program felt like an additional burden varied considerably: P1 rated burden at 9/10, P2 at 8/10, P3 and P4 at 4/10, and P5 at 2/10.

The two-week length of the program was manageable.

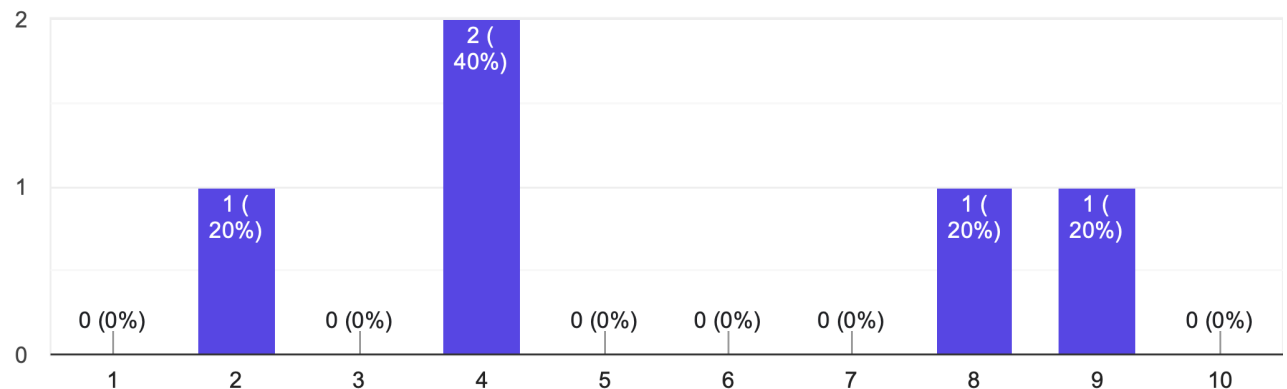
5 responses



*Likert Scale where 1 = Strongly Disagree to 10 = Strongly Agree

Completing the program felt like an additional burden in my daily life.

5 responses



I found these differences particularly interesting because they did not align with completion rates or time spent on the program. P1 completed all 14 days despite reporting the highest burden, while P5 also completed every day and spent the most time on the exercises yet reported the lowest burden. Ratings of how well AVB fit into participants' daily lives also varied, ranging from 2/10 to 9/10. Interestingly, P1 rated the program's fit into her daily life at 8/10 despite reporting a burden of 9/10, while P2 rated daily-life fit at only 2/10 and burden at 8/10. These differences

suggest that participants' experiences of burden were not necessarily reflected in how well they felt the program fit into their lives.

The interview analysis helped explain why perceived burden differed among participants. During coding, I identified practical demands, competing responsibilities, mental capacity, and the ability to establish routines as key aspects of their experiences. These factors appeared to influence whether the exercises felt manageable, even when the time required was relatively short. The differences among participants also suggested that burden was not necessarily reflected in completion rates alone.

P1 acknowledged that completing the program was easier when she had fewer responsibilities. She was also on vacation for about half of the program, which gave her more flexibility than she normally would have had. Her full completion therefore needs to be considered alongside the circumstances that made participation easier.

P2 provided an interesting contrast between her questionnaire and interview responses. Despite rating burden at 8/10, she explained:

“I didn’t find anything burdensome about the tasks that were required.” – P2

She generally completed the exercises in 20 minutes or less and found them manageable when she could make time. However, as previously stated, her academic workload made it difficult to maintain participation.

This suggests that the burden of a well-being program may stem less from the activities themselves than from finding additional time and mental energy when someone is already overwhelmed.

P3 identified a similar distinction between having time and having the capacity to engage:

“It came down to my mental capacity that day. I definitely had the time.” – P3

Although she sometimes found it difficult to begin, she also valued the program's structure, instructions, and deadline. These provided direction and helped her return to the exercises. Her experience suggests that structure can support participation while still allowing flexibility around demanding days.

Some exercises also required more effort than others. P3 occasionally struggled to follow breathwork instructions while concentrating on her breathing and suggested that guided audio would be helpful. Sung affirmations required additional creative effort and did not always feel natural to her.

P4 experienced a different difficulty with sung affirmations. She initially interpreted the exercise as requiring her to write a complete song or chorus, rather than one or two lines of an affirmation set to a melody. Because songwriting was already part of her artistic identity, she placed pressure on herself to produce something musically satisfactory:

"I think I was interpreting it wrong. Also, I just wanted to write a whole chorus." - P4

The interview coding also revealed that participants experienced the same exercises differently. Activities that felt straightforward or meaningful to one participant could require additional effort or create discomfort for another, highlighting the importance of clear instructions and allowing flexibility in how individuals complete practices. As the program's developer, I found P4's experience particularly useful. Her misinterpretation of the exercise led her to become critical of her songwriting. An exercise intended to encourage self-compassion and positivity unintentionally introduced the very creative expectations and self-criticism the program was designed to address.

P5, by contrast, appreciated the variety of activities and deliberately made space for the program in her morning routine. She sometimes woke earlier to complete the exercises and found that doing so replaced time she might otherwise have spent 'doomscrolling' on her phone. Although she reported spending more time on the program than the other participants, she did not find it particularly burdensome.

Taken together, these experiences suggest that burden is not simply a matter of how many minutes an intervention requires. Participants bring different schedules, levels of mental energy, prior experiences, and expectations to the activities. The way the program fits into their lives may therefore be just as important as its content.

This is consistent with Sekhon et al.'s (2017) Theoretical Framework of Acceptability, which highlights burden and opportunity costs as critical factors shaping people's experience of an intervention. For these participants, the demands of AVB were influenced not only by the exercises themselves but also by the responsibilities they managed concurrently.

Overall, the two-week duration and daily time commitment were acceptable to most participants, but consistent program completion was not equally practical for everyone. Greater flexibility, clearer instructions, and additional guidance for certain exercises may help reduce unnecessary demands while preserving what participants found meaningful.

Most importantly, these findings reinforce the distinction between finding a program valuable and integrating it into everyday life. This leads into the next section, which examines how participants made room for AVB within their existing routines.

Integration into Everyday Life

One objective of this study was to explore how participants integrated AVB into their everyday lives. Although the program was strategically designed as a structured sequence of daily exercises, I deliberately left participants free to decide when, where, and how to engage with it. I wanted to see how they would approach the program without prescribing a particular routine. The interviews revealed differences in how participants used this flexibility, offering useful insights into how AVB might work in practice.

P3 provided a particularly interesting example. She already enjoyed journaling and chose to complete the written exercises in her existing journal, often while having coffee or tea. She also experimented with completing different activities at different times of day, generally preferring journaling in the morning but occasionally moving breathwork to the evening.

I found this very interesting because I had deliberately designed the daily exercises to be completed together, beginning with breathwork. The intention was that breathwork would support emotional regulation, helping participants feel calmer and more centered before undertaking the gratitude, self-compassion, and other reflective exercises. However, P3 described finding breathwork challenging, attributing some of this difficulty to her ADHD:

“Breathwork was one of those things that I think I struggled with a little bit because of ADHD things. But it’s kind of the ‘Wild West’ up in here in my brain sometimes.” – P3

I found this very interesting because it challenged an underlying structure of AVB. Although breathwork was intended to prepare participants for the remaining exercises, P3’s experience suggested that the practice itself could present difficulties for some individuals. Her decision to sometimes complete breathwork separately also raised questions about whether the intended exercise sequence was necessary for participants to find the exercises useful. While this study cannot answer that question, it highlights the importance of considering individual differences when evaluating AVB’s feasibility.

P3 also adapted certain exercises to suit her preferences. When visualizing the box during box breathing proved difficult, she concentrated on counting instead. Similarly, when composing melodies for sung affirmations felt demanding, she sometimes used familiar melodies or spoke the affirmations out loud:

“The spoken just felt...felt a little more natural for me.” – P3

Rather than abandoning the exercises, P3 found ways to make them more accessible to her. Her experience suggested that allowing participants some choice in how they completed the practices could support engagement, though it also raised questions about how much adaptation could occur before the original intervention was meaningfully altered.

Another finding concerned how participants used the program materials. Although AVB was distributed digitally, all 5 participants preferred to handwrite their responses in a notebook. P5 explained:

“I spend so much time on a screen that I was like, I want this to be, like, the thing that I don’t have to be on my phone or computer.” – P5

As a voice teacher working with singer-songwriter clientele, I found this interesting but not entirely surprising. Many songwriters already use notebooks and journals to save original lyric and song

ideas, write reflectively, and record personal experiences as part of their creative process. Completing AVB in a notebook or journal may have felt familiar because it drew on an existing artistic practice. Although participants did not explicitly identify this as the reason for their preference, the finding suggests that future versions of AVB might benefit from offering a physical journal alongside the digital format.

Existing experience with individual practices also appeared to influence integration. P5's previous yoga training meant that breathwork was already familiar to her, while P3's established journaling practice provided a natural way to incorporate the written exercises. Notably, all five participants reported having existing journaling practices, although the frequency and consistency varied. However, this did not necessarily mean they had previously practiced gratitude journaling. Three participants reported engaging in intentional gratitude journaling, although not consistently, while P4 incorporated gratitude into her general journaling without specifically practicing gratitude journaling. This distinction is particularly interesting because both P4 and P5 subsequently identified gratitude journaling as the most helpful component of AVB.

During the first coding cycle, participants' accounts of their daily routines, preferences, and adjustments to the exercises were identified with the categories of Feasibility, Acceptability, and Barriers and Refinement. Comparing these accounts revealed a pattern in which participants drew upon familiar routines and adapted individual exercises to their preferences. P3's experience also highlighted tension between the program's intended structure and how participants chose to engage with it. Together, these findings contributed to the emerging theme of personalization as a condition of meaningful engagement (**see Appendices 11 and 12**).

Overall, these findings suggest that successful integration depended on more than the time required to complete AVB. They underscored the importance of accommodating individual preferences when deciding which elements of the program's original structure to retain in future implementation. Participants' previous experience with individual practices also appeared relevant, suggesting that familiarity with an exercise and familiarity with the particular way it was presented in AVB were not necessarily the same thing.

Individual Practices

In addition to examining the feasibility of completing AVB as a whole, I wanted to understand how participants experienced the individual practices. The post-program questionnaire asked participants to rate the helpfulness and personal meaning of the exercises, while the interviews allowed me to explore their responses in greater detail. Although participants generally

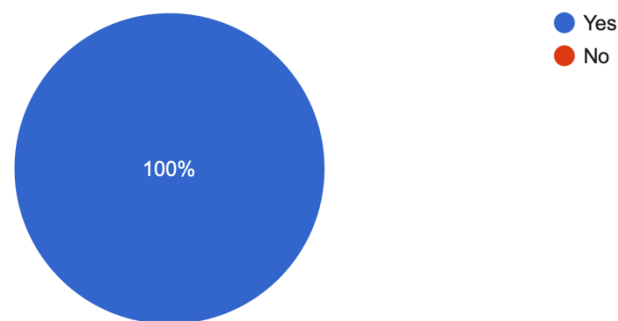
responded positively to the program, their experiences of the individual components varied. This was particularly important in understanding which practices they found valuable, which presented challenges, and which they intended to continue using.

Breathwork

Breathwork was generally well-received, although participants differed in how comfortable and helpful they found the exercises. Four participants (80%) rated its helpfulness between 7/10 and 10/10, while P2 rated it a 6/10. All 5 (100%) indicated that they would use breathwork again, suggesting that difficulties with a particular exercise did not necessarily mean participants rejected the practice altogether.

Would you use breathwork exercises again?

5 responses



*All five participants said they would use breathwork again, even though they described difficulties with some exercises in their interviews. This suggests they saw value in breathwork overall, while distinguishing it from their experiences with specific techniques.

P1 identified breathwork as the most helpful component of AVB. Although she had previously practiced breathing exercises, she explained in the post-program questionnaire that she rarely continued them for more than a minute, continuing:

“Breathwork for an extended period of time! I usually give up after 5 breaths lol. So it was good for me to sit in it for 5-10 minutes and feel the uncomfortability melt into relaxation.” – P1

Her experience suggests the benefit came not only from the breathing exercise itself but also from having a structured reason to continue it. During her interview, she explained that she responded well to structure and that the program encouraged her to remain with an exercise she might otherwise have abandoned. However, not everyone shared this experience. P2 described breathwork as stressful rather than relaxing, explaining:

“I just don’t feel relaxed by breathwork. It stresses me out.” – P2

P3 also experienced some difficulty with the visualization involved in box breathing and adapted the exercise by counting instead. P5, who had previous breathwork experience through yoga, sometimes found it challenging to concentrate on her breathing.

These responses highlighted the importance of distinguishing between the perceived benefits of breathwork and participants’ comfort with the way particular exercises were presented. They also suggested that providing alternatives or additional guidance might make the practices more accessible.

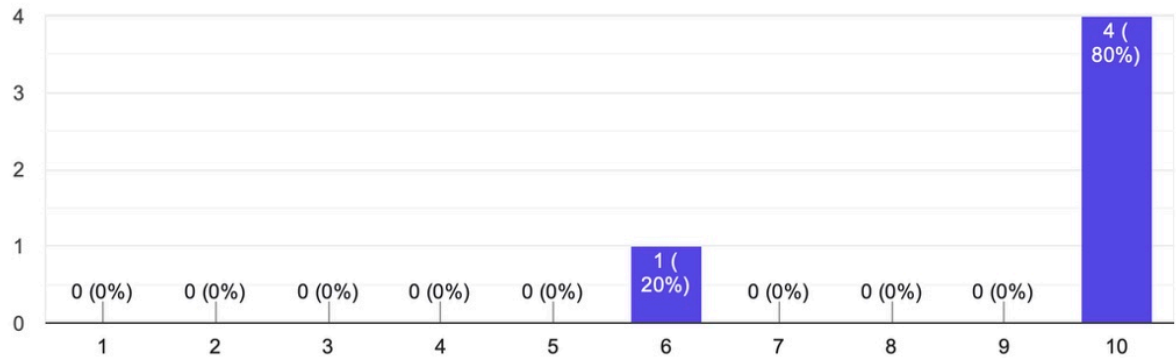
Gratitude Journaling

Gratitude journaling received some of the most consistently positive responses. When asked how helpful they found gratitude journaling in supporting their well-being during the program, participants rated it from 6/10 to 10/10, with four participants (80%) rating it 10/10. Similarly, four participants (80%) rated the statement, ‘I found the gratitude exercises helpful for supporting my overall well-being,’ at 9/10 or 10/10. All five (100%) indicated that they would use

gratitude journaling again.

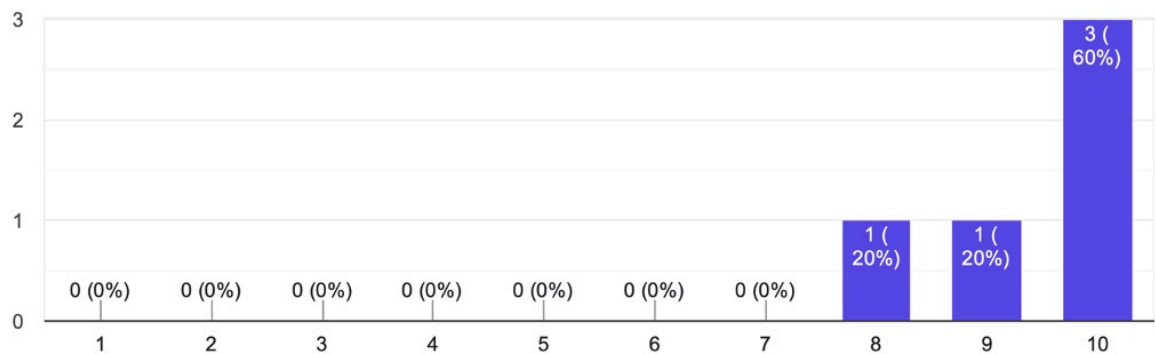
How helpful did you find gratitude journaling for supporting your well-being during the program?

5 responses



I found the gratitude exercises helpful for supporting my overall well-being.

5 responses



Although all five participants had previously journaled, their experience with intentional gratitude journaling varied. P1, P2, and P3 had previously used gratitude journaling, although not consistently. P4 explained that she tried to focus on gratitude in her general journaling but did not intentionally practice gratitude journaling, while P5 reported no previous experience with the practice.

Interestingly, P4 and P5 both identified gratitude journaling as the most helpful component of AVB. This suggested that prior experience with the practice was not necessarily required to find it valuable.

P2 also described a change in the focus of her journaling. In her post-program questionnaire, she wrote:

“Gratitude journaling is helpful because it made me reflect on what I’m grateful for rather than just complaining or talking about negative topics in my journal.” – P2

Similarly, P3 explained:

“I really enjoyed the process of taking stock of the positive things, events and people in my life every day. That helped me stay grounded and focus on the positive rather than the negatives.” – P3

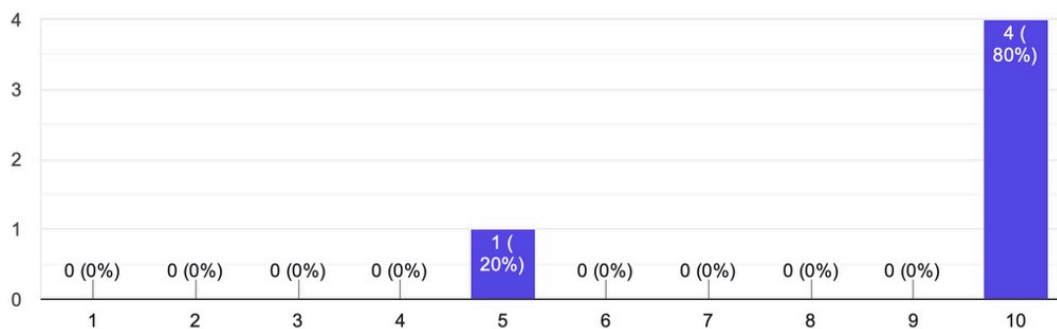
These responses suggest that gratitude journaling helped participants become more intentional about recognizing positive experiences, even when they were already familiar with journaling.

Self-Compassion Exercises

Self-compassion was another highly rated component of AVB. Four participants (80%) rated its helpfulness at 10/10, while P2 rated it at 6/10. All five participants (100%) indicated that they would use self-compassion exercises again. However, the questionnaire and interview responses suggest that finding these exercises helpful did not necessarily mean they were comfortable. Several participants described becoming more aware of their self-criticism or recognizing how difficult it could be to speak kindly to themselves.

The self-compassion exercises helped me respond to myself with greater kindness.

5 responses



P5 provided a particularly clear example in her post-program questionnaire:

“I found the self-compassion exercises and framework were incredibly helpful as they helped me pivot my negative self-thoughts into productive ways of thinking. Rather than beating myself over my thoughts, they allowed me to spin them in a more positive direction.” – P5

P4 also described initially finding it unnatural to say positive things about herself. However, she explained that the exercises changed her perspective and made her realize she was not always as kind to herself as she had believed. Interestingly, P4 identified self-compassion as her least helpful practice in comparison to the other practices; however, she rated its helpfulness at 10/10. This apparent contradiction suggests that numerical ratings did not always capture the complexity of participants' experiences. It also reinforced the importance of examining the questionnaire responses alongside the interviews.

These findings suggest that self-compassion exercises could be meaningful even when they challenged participants' established ways of thinking about themselves.

Reflective Prompts

The reflective prompts were incorporated into the gratitude journaling exercises and were intentionally designed for female singer-songwriters. For example, participants were asked to write about a moment when music made them feel connected, or to write about someone who

had supported their creativity (and then write them a letter of gratitude). My intention was to create a program in which participants could recognize their own experiences and feel that the material was relevant to their lives as artists, rather than completing a general well-being program.

Four participants (80%) rated their helpfulness between 8/10 and 10/10, while P2 rated it at 6/10. Similarly, four (80%) rated the statement, 'The reflective prompts helped me become more aware of my thoughts, feelings, or experiences,' between 8/10 and 10/10.

The interviews provided further support for the relevance of this approach. When asked whether AVB felt specifically designed for independent female singer-songwriters, all five participants agreed (100%). P1 specifically identified the reflective exercises as something that distinguished AVB from a general well-being program, explaining:

“Well, you’re singing, step 1. Step 2, all of the reflection was targeted. Um, yeah, I mean, that’s huge.” – P1

P5 also recognized the artist-specific nature of the prompts but appreciated that the program encouraged her to think about herself as a person, rather than focusing exclusively on her identity as a musician.

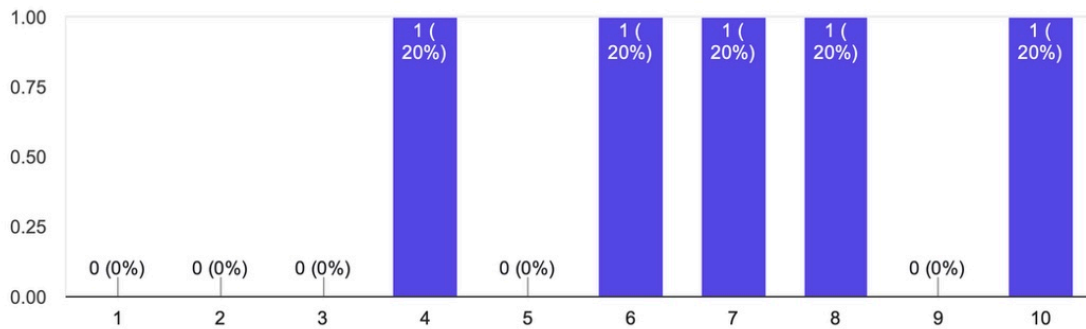
These responses suggested that tailoring the reflective prompts to participants' artistic experiences contributed to AVB's perceived relevance, while still allowing them to explore aspects of their well-being beyond their professional identities.

Sung Affirmations

Sung affirmations produced the most varied responses of the five components. Helpfulness ratings ranged from 4/10 to 10/10, and three of the five participants (60%) identified sung affirmations as their least helpful practice. Although four participants (80%) indicated that they would use sung affirmations again, their ratings for intending to continue the practice ranged from 3/10 to 9/10.

How helpful were the sung affirmations in supporting your well-being during the program?

5 responses



This was particularly interesting because AVB was developed specifically for female singer-songwriters, and incorporating the singing voice was intended to distinguish the program from more conventional well-being exercises.

P3 found speaking affirmations more natural than singing them and sometimes adapted the exercises by using familiar melodies or speaking the words instead. In her post-program questionnaire, she explained:

“Spoken feels better for me. It just didn’t feel natural to sing them in the mirror. But writing them down, reading them, and speaking them felt helpful.” – P3

P4 also experienced some initial difficulty, though her response developed differently. During her interview, she explained that she initially approached the exercise as if she needed to write a complete chorus:

“I’m my own biggest critic, right? So, I wanted it to be good.” – P4

However, as she continued, she began to recognize that the exercise wasn’t meant to produce a polished piece of songwriting. Describing this change, she explained:

“I’m singing this song because I made it and it’s for me and it’s not for anyone else and no one’s judging it and I’m not performing it.” – P4

P4 rated the personal meaning of sung affirmations at 10/10 and was also the participant most likely to continue using them, rating this likelihood at 9/10. Her experience suggested that the exercise became more meaningful when she separated singing for personal well-being from the expectations associated with professional performance.

P1 and P5 also reported initial discomfort with sung affirmations, though both became more comfortable with the practice. Their experiences suggested that familiarity and willingness to experiment could influence participants' responses to this component.

These contrasting experiences contributed to the theme of *reclaiming creative practices for personal well-being*, particularly the tension between using singing as personal expression and approaching it with expectations associated with professional songwriting (**see Appendix 12**).

Summary of Individual Practices

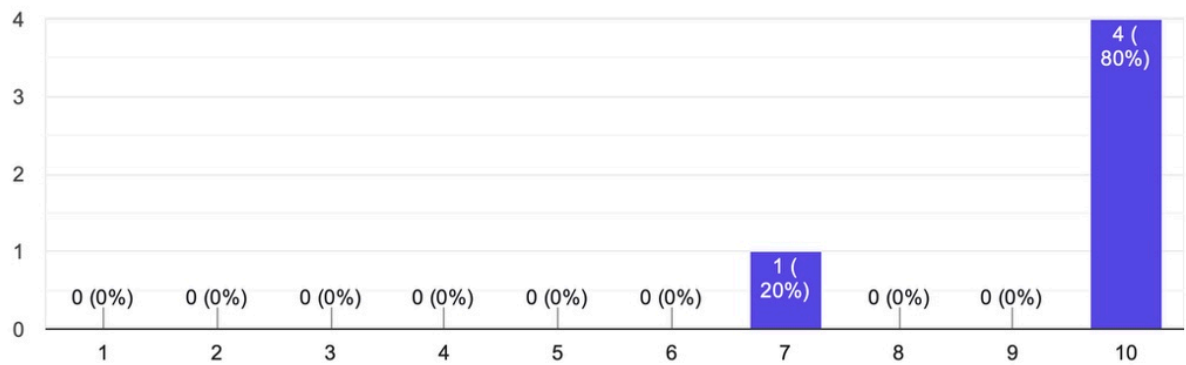
Overall, gratitude journaling and self-compassion received the strongest helpfulness ratings, while sung affirmations showed the greatest variation. However, participants' responses also showed that helpfulness, personal meaning, comfort, and willingness to continue were not necessarily the same. The coding reflected these differences, particularly in relation to familiarity, discomfort, self-kindness, performance expectations, and individual preferences (**see Appendix 11**). These findings suggested that AVB acceptability depended not only on the practices selected but also on how participants experienced and interpreted them in their own lives.

Acceptability and Appropriateness

In addition to understanding whether AVB was feasible to complete, I wanted to explore whether participants found the program enjoyable, meaningful, and appropriate for their experiences as independent female singer-songwriters. The post-program questionnaire indicated generally positive responses, with four participants (80%) rating their enjoyment of AVB at 10/10, while P2 rated it 7/10.

I enjoyed participating in "A Voice Becoming..."

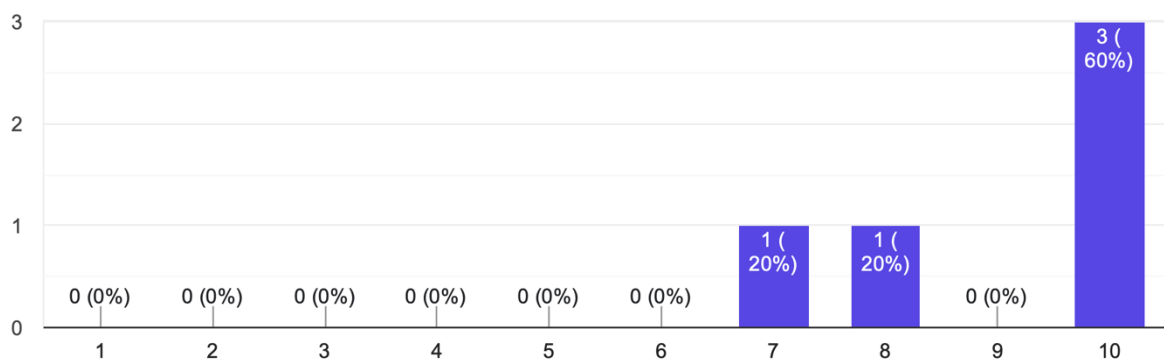
5 responses



Four participants (80%) also rated their willingness to participate in a similar program again between 8/10 and 10/10, while P2 rated it 7/10. Although participants' levels of engagement and completion varied, these responses suggested that difficulties incorporating the program into everyday life did not necessarily mean they found the program unacceptable.

I would be willing to participate in a program like this again.

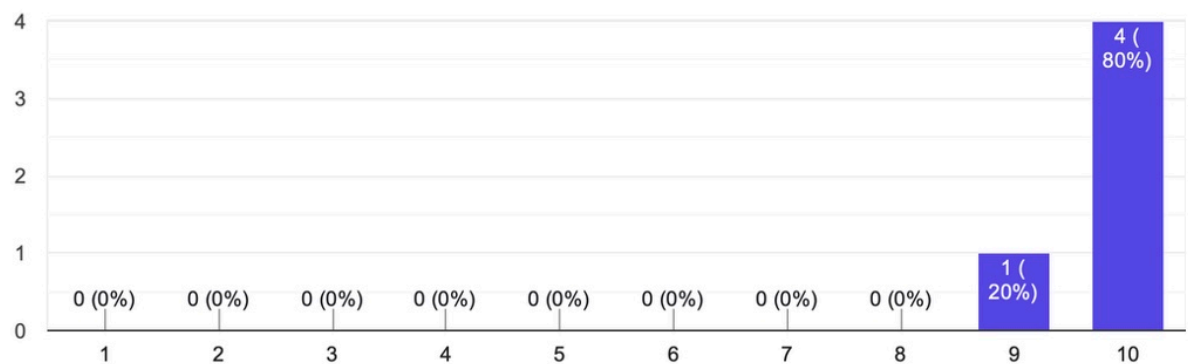
5 responses



An important finding concerned AVB's relevance to its intended participants. All five participants (100%) rated the statement that AVB was relevant to their experiences as independent female singer-songwriters as 9/10 or 10/10.

The program felt relevant to my experience as an independent female singer-songwriter.

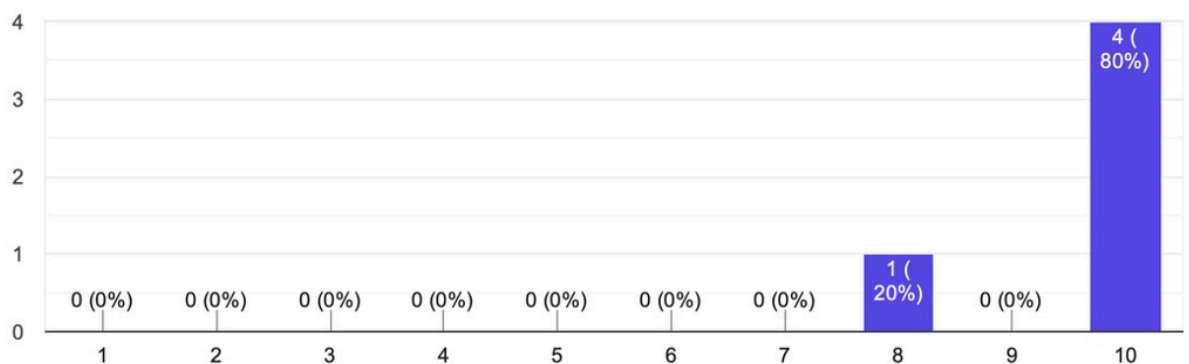
5 responses



Similarly, all five (100%) rated the appropriateness of the practices for supporting artists' well-being at 8/10 or higher.

The practices felt appropriate for supporting my well-being as an artist.

5 responses



The interviews provided further support for the relevance of AVB to its intended participants. When asked whether the program felt specifically designed for someone like them, all five participants (100%) agreed. P2 recognized the intention behind its emphasis on gratitude and self-compassion, explaining that these were practices she believed female singer-songwriters particularly needed. She also appreciated that AVB addressed their well-being rather than focusing exclusively on professional achievement:

“It’s refreshing that there’s something that has to do with being a female songwriter that’s not just for the sake of success.” – P2

I found this response particularly meaningful because one of my intentions in developing AVB was to provide support for artists as people, rather than focusing exclusively on their professional development or achievement.

P4 also connected the program’s relevance to the pressures she experienced as a female songwriter, including expectations of success and a tendency towards self-criticism. She explained that the self-compassion exercises were meaningful to her and that the program’s use of creativity reflected her experiences as a songwriter. P5 also recognized the artist-specific prompts but appreciated that the program encouraged her to explore who she was beyond her professional identity. For her, the sung affirmations connected the exercises to her love of singing while allowing her to use her voice for something other than performance.

However, participants did not necessarily believe that the practices should be limited to musicians. P3, despite describing AVB as specifically designed for her, suggested that its individual components could also benefit people outside the music industry. P4 similarly acknowledged that practices such as self-compassion and emotional regulation could benefit anyone. These responses suggested that AVB's relevance came not from the exclusivity of its practices, but from how they were presented and connected to participants’ experiences.

Taken together, the questionnaire and interview findings indicated that AVB was generally acceptable and appropriate for this small group of independent female singer-songwriters. Participants recognized the design's intent and valued a program that acknowledged their artistic experiences without focusing solely on professional success. At the same time, differences in engagement and preferences for individual practices suggested that acceptability did not

necessarily translate into consistent participation. This distinction is important when considering how AVB might be refined and offered to other artists.

Perceived Effectiveness

In addition to examining the feasibility and acceptability of AVB, I wanted to understand whether participants perceived any changes in their well-being as a result of engaging with the program. The pre- and post-program questionnaires allowed me to compare participants' responses in areas including emotional regulation, self-compassion, resilience, stress, and their relationship with their creative lives. The interviews provided further insight into how participants experienced these changes, or in some cases, why they felt that little had changed.

Presentation of Findings – Perceived Effectiveness

Measure	Pre	Post	Change
Maintaining healthy, consistent creative routines	4.6	7.0	+2.4
Being kind to myself when things do not go well	3.4	5.4	+2.0
Always speaking kindly to myself	3.6	5.2	+1.6
Having effective emotional regulation strategies	7.6	8.8	+1.2
Experiencing self-criticism related to music*	7.8	6.8	- 1.0

*denotes a favorable change since lower scores indicate less self-criticism

Self-compassion was one of the clearest areas of perceived improvement. Four participants (80%) reported an increased ability to treat themselves kindly when things went wrong, while P2 reported a decrease. Similarly, four participants (80%) reported being less self-critical following the program, while P5's rating remained unchanged. When asked how often they spoke kindly to themselves, four participants (80%) reported an improvement, while P3's rating remained the same.

The findings were reflected in the interviews: P4 described initially finding it unnatural to speak kindly to herself but explained that the exercises encouraged her to reconsider how she responded to her own mistakes. P5 similarly reported that the self-compassion exercises helped her recognize negative thought patterns and approach them differently. In her post-program questionnaire, she explained:

“I found the self-compassion exercises and framework were incredibly helpful as they helped me pivot my negative self thoughts into productive ways of thinking. Rather than beating myself over my thoughts, they allowed me to spin them in a more positive direction.” – P5

The pre-program questionnaire also highlighted a baseline finding about the pressures participants experienced related to social media. All five participants (100%) rated their enjoyment of promoting themselves on social media at 1/10, while their confidence in their social media image ranged from 1/10 to 3/10. When asked about the challenges they faced as female singer-songwriters, P1 described social media as something she felt was very necessary for advancing her career, despite believing it negatively affected her mental health:

“Feeling like social media is the only way to further myself as an artist, while simultaneously feeling like it is an insidious problem. When I act, I don’t like memorizing lines, but I do it so I can do the thing I love - the acting. I believe there will always be things you don’t want to do that you must do in order to do the thing you love. But social media feels particularly insidious and like it has major effects on my mental health. It’s not just a minor inconvenience of memorizing lines, it’s a toxic problem.” – P1

P4 identified the pressure to maintain a perfect social media image, while P5 described the expectation that female artists must present themselves in particular ways to appeal to others.

I found these responses consistent with Musgrave et al. (2025), whose research highlighted the pressures musicians experience to maintain an online presence, including social comparison, self-presentation, and the potential consequences for their mental health. These responses were particularly interesting in relation to self-compassion. Although AVB was not designed specifically to address social media use, the participants’ responses suggested that the pressures of presenting and promoting themselves professionally may contribute to the self-criticism and expectations they experience as artists. This provided further context for the relevance of the self-compassion exercises within AVB. However, as changes in attitudes towards social media were not measured following the program, it is not possible to determine whether AVB influenced these experiences. The underlying reason for not measuring post-program was that, although

perceived effectiveness is important, this study focused on the program's feasibility and acceptability, rather than establishing the effectiveness of individual practices in addressing specific occupational pressures.

Although the responses suggested that self-compassion was a meaningful component of AVB, the changes were not consistent across all participants. P2 reported lower levels of self-kindness following the program, despite identifying self-compassion as the practice she found most helpful. This highlighted an important distinction between valuing an exercise and experiencing improved well-being during the same period.

Emotional regulation also showed a generally positive pattern. Four participants (80%) reported an improvement in their ability to regulate their emotions, while P2's rating remained unchanged. Interestingly, P2 had completed fewer days of the program than the other four participants, raising the possibility that the amount of engagement may have influenced participants' perceived outcomes.

However, responses concerning stress and resilience were less consistent. Two participants (40%) showed increased resilience, two (40%) reported no change, and one (20%) reported a decrease (P2). Similarly, participants' ratings of their ability to manage stress varied, with two (40%) reporting improvement, two (40%) remaining unchanged, and one reporting a decrease (P2).

The interviews helped explain some of these differences. P2 was experiencing considerable academic and professional pressure during the intervention and described finding it increasingly difficult to prioritize self-care as her stress increased. Her experience suggests that engaging with a well-being program did not necessarily offset the pressures participants were already experiencing. It also raised the possibility that the participants who might benefit from additional well-being support during particularly stressful periods may be those who find it most difficult to engage with a structured daily program. P1, on the other hand, described feeling less anxious and more compassionate towards herself. However, she had also resumed taking medication during the intervention, making it impossible to attribute these changes specifically to AVB.

P2's experience was particularly interesting because she was the only participant who did not report improved emotional regulation. Having only completed five of the fourteen days, she had considerably less exposure to the practices than the other participants. She also described finding breathwork stressful rather than relaxing, suggesting that one of the practices intended to support emotional regulation was not helpful to her. I wondered whether her limited engagement,

combined with her difficulty with breathwork, might help explain why she did not experience the same perceived improvement as the other participants. However, given the considerable pressures she was experiencing during the intervention, it is not possible to determine which factors contributed to this outcome.

I was also interested in whether AVB influenced participants' relationships with their creative lives. Four participants (80%) reported an improvement in maintaining routines that supported their creativity, while one participant (20%) reported a decrease. However, responses concerning their connection to their singing voices were more varied: one participant (20%) reported an improvement, two (40%) reported no change, and two (40%) reported a decrease.

This was particularly interesting given that sung affirmations were intended to encourage participants to use their voices for personal well-being rather than performance, while also cultivating beliefs that might support their personal growth. Although P4 described finding personal meaning in creating and singing her own affirmations, not everyone shared this experience. P3 preferred speaking her affirmations, while other participants initially found singing them uncomfortable. I wondered whether an exercise intended to encourage self-compassion and personal growth might also create feelings of vulnerability, particularly for participants who are unfamiliar with the practice or who may not yet believe the affirmations they are expressing about themselves. These differences suggested that the relationship between singing and well-being was more complex than I had anticipated, and that an exercise involving the voice was not necessarily experienced as beneficial simply because the participants were singers.

Participants' responses concerning artistic confidence were similarly mixed. Two participants (40%) reported increased confidence, two (40%) reported no change, and one (20%) reported a decrease. P2 was the only participant who reported a decrease in artistic confidence, from 6/10 to 4/10. As she is studying songwriting in school and was experiencing considerable academic pressure during the intervention, I wondered whether these circumstances might have influenced how she evaluated her artistic confidence. However, the interviews did not establish a direct connection between her academic experiences and this change. This suggested that while some participants experienced AVB as personally meaningful, those experiences did not necessarily translate into changes in how they perceived themselves professionally.

The thematic coding of the interviews provided further context for interpreting these mixed outcomes. In particular, codes related to self-compassion and emotional regulation, artist identity, and negative or contradictory experiences highlighted differences that were not immediately

apparent from the questionnaire ratings alone (**see Appendix 11**). Although several participants reported perceived improvements, their interviews suggested that the meaning and usefulness of individual practices varied considerably. I found this particularly important because it reinforced the value of examining participants' experiences alongside the numerical responses, rather than relying on changes in questionnaire scores as evidence of effectiveness.

Overall, the findings suggested that AVB had the greatest perceived benefits in self-compassion and emotional regulation, although not all participants experienced these consistently. Changes in stress, resilience, artistic confidence, and connection to the singing voice were less conclusive. Given the small sample, the short duration of the intervention, and the absence of a comparison group, these findings cannot establish that AVB caused the changes reported. Rather, they provide an initial indication of which aspects of well-being participants felt the program supported, and where further exploration may be needed.

Synthesis of Findings

Taken together, the questionnaire responses and thematic analysis of the interviews provided a more complete understanding of AVB's feasibility and acceptability. Although participants generally found the program enjoyable, relevant, and meaningful, their experiences highlighted several factors that influenced their ability to incorporate it into their everyday lives. Three overarching themes emerged from the analysis: **the tension between intention and capacity**, **supporting engagement with an integrated intervention**, and **reclaiming creative practices for personal well-being** (see Appendix 12).

The Tension Between Intention and Capacity

One of the most important findings was the distinction between wanting to engage in self-care and having the capacity to do so. Although all five participants completed the study, their engagement with the daily practices varied considerably. I found it particularly encouraging that P1 and P5 completed all 14 days of AVB, while P3 completed 13. This meant that three of the five participants (60%) completed nearly all or all of the program, suggesting that AVB could be incorporated into the daily lives of the independent singer-songwriters it was designed to support.

Interestingly, these were the three participants focused on building their careers as independent singer-songwriters, while P4 and P2, who were also college students, completed eight and five days, respectively. I wondered whether AVB felt more meaningful to the independent artists

because they were at a stage in their lives where they had to take greater responsibility for their own well-being, without the parental or institutional support available to younger college-aged artists. Although I cannot know whether this influenced their completion rates, I found it encouraging that the participants most closely aligned with the population AVB was designed to support demonstrated the highest levels of adherence. This also raised an interesting question for future research: ***whether an artist's perceived need for support influences their willingness to engage with a program such as AVB.***

At the same time, the experiences of P4 and P2 highlighted the difficulties that completing responsibilities could create. P2's experience was particularly revealing because she recognized the relevance of AVB but struggled to prioritize the exercises as her academic pressures increased. This suggested that the feasibility of a well-being intervention cannot be determined solely by whether participants consider its activities manageable or worthwhile. Their circumstances and emotional capacity may be equally important.

Supporting Engagement with an Integrated Intervention

My original intention was for the practices in AVB to work together as an integrated daily program, with the expectation that their combined benefits might provide greater support than any individual exercise. I anticipated that participants would naturally gravitate towards certain practices more than others, but I believed that engaging with the program as a whole would offer the greatest potential benefit. The findings suggested that while participants valued different components, their ability to engage consistently with the complete program varied considerably. Furthermore, some participants adapted individual exercises or engaged with them differently than originally intended. This made it difficult to determine whether the perceived benefits came from engaging with AVB as an integrated intervention, from specific practices participants found helpful, or from other factors affecting their well-being. This made me wonder whether there were ways to make it easier for participants to complete the full program as intended, without changing the practices themselves. Although the study was not designed to determine whether the combined practices were more effective than individual exercises, the variation in participants' engagement highlighted the importance of examining both adherence and how closely the intervention was followed as intended.

Reclaiming Creative Practices for Personal Well-Being

Perhaps the most meaningful finding for me concerned the distinction between using creativity for professional achievement and using it for personal well-being. Participants consistently

recognized AVB as relevant to their experiences as female singer-songwriters, even though the individual practices were not exclusive to musicians. P4's experience with sung affirmations illustrated how an exercise involving songwriting could initially bring expectations of perfection before becoming something she could create purely for herself. P2's appreciation of a program that focused on artists' well-being rather than their professional success further reinforced this distinction.

Overall, these themes suggested that AVB was generally acceptable and showed promise as a feasible intervention for this small group of participants, although individual circumstances, preferences, and existing routines influenced its integration into everyday life. Although the individual well-being practices incorporated into AVB have applications beyond the music industry, the program was intentionally designed as an integrated intervention for independent female singer-songwriters. Its artist-specific reflective prompts, creative exercises, and use of singing were developed to address experiences and pressures relevant to this population. Participants' consistently high ratings of the program's relevance suggested that this approach was appropriate and meaningful to them. However, participants' differing levels of completion and adaptations to individual exercises raised an important question about feasibility: whether they could consistently engage with the integrated program as it was designed. This distinction mattered because the intervention's theoretical rationale was based on the practices working together, rather than on participants selecting the components they preferred. Consequently, while the findings provided encouraging evidence of acceptability, they offered a less conclusive picture of the feasibility of implementing AVB in its intended form.

Refinement and Future Implementation

The findings suggested that AVB would benefit from some practical refinements before being introduced to a larger group. However, I do not believe these changes should involve changing the individual practices, as I selected each based on research supporting its potential benefits for well-being. My intention was for the practices to work together as an integrated program, and I believe this approach should be maintained.

The most obvious improvements concern program delivery. Although all five participants completed their written exercises in journals, P1 found the PDF inconvenient to navigate, while P3 suggested audio guidance for the breathwork exercises. A more accessible workbook, with printed daily instructions and guided breathwork recordings, could make AVB easier to follow.

The sung affirmations would also benefit from clearer instructions and examples, as P1 specifically suggested. P4's experience reminded me that singer-songwriters may approach even a personal creative exercise with expectations of producing something polished. I would therefore emphasize that the purpose of these exercises is personal expression rather than professional achievement.

Finally, I would consider including suggestions for establishing a daily routine, as this appeared to support consistent engagement. Future research could examine whether these refinements improve adherence, particularly among artists balancing competing responsibilities. For me, the priority is to make AVB easier to incorporate into everyday life while preserving the integrated approach that guided its development.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research began with a question that has become increasingly important to me through my work as a voice teacher and vocal coach: How can I better support the well-being of independent female singer-songwriters? Having developed "A Voice Becoming..." (AVB) as a two-week, research-informed program combining breathwork, gratitude journaling, self-compassion exercises, and sung affirmations, I wanted to understand whether it could realistically become part of their everyday lives. This study did not aim to establish effectiveness, but to explore feasibility, acceptability, and potential for further development.

The findings allowed me to answer the three research sub-questions:

1. How do participants experience engaging with AVB?

Overall, participants experienced AVB as a relevant, enjoyable, and meaningful program, although their responses to individual practices varied. All five rated its relevance to female singer-songwriters at either 9/10 or 10/10. Participants particularly valued opportunities for reflection and self-compassion, while the sung affirmations produced more varied experiences.

I found the distinction between using creativity for professional achievement and personal well-being particularly meaningful. AVB let participants explore their voices and creativity without needing to produce work for an audience, suggesting this artist-specific approach was relevant and worthwhile..

2. What factors support or hinder the integration of AVB into participants' everyday artistic and professional lives?

The findings suggested that establishing a daily routine, making time for the exercises, and finding personal meaning in the practices supported engagement. Conversely, competing academic and professional responsibilities, limited emotional capacity, and practical difficulties with the program's delivery could make consistent participation more challenging.

Importantly, P1 and P5 completed all 14 days, while P3 completed 13. These three participants, focused on developing their independent music careers, showed that AVB could be integrated into their lives with high adherence. P2 and P4, who were also college students, completed fewer days. Although I cannot determine whether their different circumstances explain these results, they raised an interesting question about whether artists' perceived need for well-being support influences their engagement.

3. To what extent do participants perceive AVB as a feasible and acceptable approach to supporting well-being?

The findings provided encouraging evidence of acceptability and preliminary evidence of feasibility. All five participants completed the research requirements, yielding 100% retention, while overall program adherence was approximately 77%. Participants generally considered AVB appropriate and relevant to their lives, though their ability to complete it consistently varied.

Although the practices within AVB are not exclusive to musicians, I believe that designing the program specifically for female singer-songwriters is important. My intention was to create something that reflected their experiences and felt personally meaningful, in the hope that this would encourage engagement. All five participants rated the program as highly relevant, suggesting that its artist-specific approach was appropriate. However, differences in adherence also showed that finding a program meaningful does not necessarily mean having the capacity to complete it consistently.

The pre- and post-program questionnaires also suggested perceived improvements in areas including self-compassion and emotional regulation. However, these findings must be interpreted cautiously. The small sample size, variation in adherence, and other factors influencing participants' well-being mean no conclusions about effectiveness can be drawn. Similarly, although the practices were selected based on existing research, this study could not determine whether combining them produced greater benefits than using them individually.

Taken together, these findings suggest that AVB has potential as a feasible and acceptable well-being intervention for female singer-songwriters, although further refinement and research are

needed. The immediate priority would be to improve the program's delivery through more accessible instructions, guided breathwork recordings, clearer examples of sung affirmations, and support for establishing a daily routine, while maintaining its integrated structure.

Future research should recruit a larger, more diverse group of independent artists, allow more time for recruitment and analysis, and assess adherence to individual practices alongside overall completion. It should also examine whether professional circumstances, perceived support needs, and access to other support affect engagement. Rigorous effectiveness evaluation should follow only after feasibility is better understood.

For me, this project has reinforced something I have come to believe through years of teaching: Supporting singers involves more than developing vocal technique or helping them succeed professionally. Their well-being matters independently of their achievements.

I began this research hoping to create something useful for the artists I teach. Although AVB is still in its early stages, the findings have encouraged me to continue developing it while giving me a clearer understanding of what needs further work. I believe this is an important first step toward making well-being support a more intentional part of my teaching practice.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Ethics Form

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL – INTRODUCTORY NOTES

In order for research to result in benefit and minimise risk of harm, it must be conducted ethically. A researcher may not be covered **by the University's insurance** if ethical approval has not been obtained prior to commencement.

Ethical approval covers activities undertaken by:

- Members of staff (academic staff or support staff);
- Individuals holding honorary title from the **University**;
- Postgraduate research students;

In all of these cases ethical review is required regardless of discipline.

The individual undertaking the research activity is known as the **lead researcher**.

Ethical approval is not required for routine audits, performance reviews, quality assurance studies, testing within normal educational requirements, and literary or artistic criticism.

For most projects you will only need to complete sections in the main part of the form. A few projects will need more detailed ethical consideration and will need you to fill in sections in an appendix. At some points in this form you will be asked questions about your research in the following way:

1	Does your research involve <<something specific>>?	YES	Click to continue to appendix <<N>>	NO	Continue to the next section
2	Have you completed appendix <<N>>?	YES	☐	NO	☐

Clicking in the appropriate box will take you to the appropriate location in the text. At the end of each appendix is a box. Clicking on this will return you to the question that originally took you to the appendix.

Return to the main form

NB These clickable links will only work if you are editing the document in the desktop version of Word, not the browser version. Please download and save the form before editing it.

Guidance notes are provided as comments or as text **IN GREEN** throughout this form. Please ensure that the comments are removed and that the green text is replaced by your own text or removed as appropriate BEFORE submitting this form. Please ensure that you have read the **VSC Research Ethics and Integrity Policy** and the **VSC Research Data Management Policy** BEFORE submitting this form.

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

SECTION A: About You (Lead Researcher)

1	Full Name:	Sharon Lea Ericksen			
2	Tick all boxes that apply:	Member of staff:	☐	Honorary research fellow:	☐
	Undergraduate Student ☐	Taught Postgraduate Student ☒		Postgraduate Research Student ☐	
3	Institute/Academic Discipline/Centre:	WAPPAR			
4	Campus:	Carmarthen			
5	E-mail address:	sharonerman@gmail.com			
6	Contact Telephone Number:	+1-508-353-7382			
7	Project Title	Integrating "A Voice Becoming..." into the lived experience of working artists: A feasibility study of well-being interventions for independent early-stage female singer-songwriters			
8	Proposed Start Date	ASAP	Proposed End Date	Oct 2, 2026	
For students:					
9	Student Number:	2029353			
10	Programme of Study:	MA in Professional Practice (Voice Pedagogy)			
11	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Louise Emanuel, Julie Crossman, Debbie Winter, Joshua Lee Cummins			

SECTION B: Grant or Contract Funding

1	Has your research been awarded, applied for, or intend to apply for external funding?	YES	Click to continue to appendix 1	NO	Continue to the next section
2	Have you completed appendix 1?	YES	☐	NO	X

SECTION C: Internal and External Ethical Guidance Materials

Ethical Guidance Documents					
Please list the core ethical guidance documents that have been referred to during the completion of this form (including any discipline-specific codes of research ethics, location-specific codes of research ethics, and also any specific ethical guidance relating to the proposed methodology). Please tick to					

confirm that your research proposal adheres to these codes and guidelines. You may add rows to this table if needed.		
1	VSC Research Ethics & Integrity Policy	☒
2	VSC Research Data Management Policy	☒
3	Open Access Publications Policy	☐
4	Export Control Policy	☐
<i>Required if Appendix 8 completed</i>		
5	Trusted Research and Innovation Policy	☒
<i>Required if research is taking place outside the UK</i>		
6	US Institutional Review Board (IRB) framework, reviewed, confirmed not applicable to this practice-based teaching/learning project.	☒

SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity

1	Does your research involve collaborating partners at another institution or organisation?	YES	Click to continue to appendix 2	NO	Continue to the next section
2	Have you completed appendix 2?	YES	☐	NO	X

SECTION E: Details of Research Activity

Aims, Vision and Approach of the Research (maximum 200 words per section) Please outline what are you hoping to achieve with your proposed work and how will you deliver it?	
1	Research aims and objectives This research aims to evaluate the feasibility, acceptability and preliminary effectiveness of “A Voice Becoming...” program created in Module 5 as a potential well-being intervention for independent and early-stage female singer-songwriters. The study seeks to understand whether integrating breathwork, gratitude journaling, self-compassion, reflective practice, and sung affirmations can support emotional regulation, resilience, and psychological well-being within the context of a voice teaching practice. Research objectives: - To implement the “A Voice Becoming...” program with a group of independent and early-stage female singer-songwriters. - To evaluate participants’ experiences, engagement, and adherence to the two-week program. - To explore the perceived impact of the program on emotional regulation, self-compassion, stress, resilience, and overall well-being. - To identify strengths, weaknesses, and practical challenges of implementing the program within a private voice teaching context. - To generate recommendations for refining the artefact and may inform the future development of evidence-based well-being interventions for singers and musicians.

2	Vision
	My previous research determined there was limited evidence regarding practical, affordable, accessible, and discipline-specific well-being interventions for independent female singer-songwriters, who are suffering from high levels of anxiety, depression, and burnout. My development of “A Voice Becoming...” attempted to address those needs directly through a two-week program utilizing an evidence-informed psychological and embodied approach within a creative context. My vision for this study is to understand how to best evaluate this program to understand its potential feasibility, efficacy and possible scalability. Although this study is small-scale, it may contribute useful qualitative insights into how breathwork, gratitude journaling, self-compassion work, and embodied vocal practices may work together to support emotional well-being, while also contributing to the growing evidence base surrounding musician-specific interventions. By evaluating both the participant experiences and the practical implementation of the program, I am hopeful the research might generate knowledge that is relevant to other voice teachers, researchers, and performers. The project is timely, as musicians’ negative mental health difficulties are escalating, and with the current challenging landscape of music industry structures and attitudes, there is a desperate need for accessible, affordable, and preventative approaches to well-being, and therefore, it has the potential to generate a positive impact.
3	Approach
	This study will focus on a qualitative, multi-modal practitioner-research approach focusing on thematic analysis to evaluate the feasibility, accessibility and perceived effectiveness of the “A Voice Becoming...” program. Data may be generated through self-reporting pre- and post-questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, reflective field notes by the researcher, observation, and literature review, with a possibility of a focus group to explore aspects of the delivery protocol. These methods are proposed to examine changes in emotional regulation, self-compassion, and psychological well-being. This approach was selected because it is well-suited to exploring rich and complex lived experiences, allowing participants to describe their experiences, perceived benefits, and challenges with the program in their own words. Descriptive statistics will provide complementary quantitative findings; however, as a voice practitioner-researcher, I do not intend on undertaking sophisticated statistical analysis. Potential risks may include participant withdrawal or inconsistent engagement, which will be managed through clear communication, informed consent, and flexible scheduling. Questions will remain open, optional, but not probing to minimize participant discomfort. Participation will be voluntary, non-coercive and the project will only begin after ethics form is approved. Data will be anonymised and stored securely according to university policy. Findings may inform refinement of the artefact, delivery practices, and future singer/artist specific-well-being interventions.
4	Location of research activity Identify all locations where research activity will take place.

Because each participant will integrate this program into their individual daily lives, the locations will vary, but participants will most likely be in their own homes. Participants will be located in the United States, likely in both the Nashville, Tennessee and Los Angeles, California areas, which are both home to a disproportionately large population of singer-songwriters compared to other metro areas. Data will be collected online and interviews will be conducted via Zoom or in-person in my private vocal studio. No research will be performed during public performance, clinical treatment, or in any high-risk situation.

5	Will any of your research be undertaken outside of the UK?	YES	Click to continue to appendix 3	NO	Continue to the next section
6	Have you completed any of appendix 3?	YES	X	NO	☐

SECTION F: Research Methods

Will the research activity include:		YES	NO
1	Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?	☒	☐
2	Use of interviews?	☒	☐
3	Use of focus groups?	☒	☐
4	Use of participant diaries?	☒	☐
5	Use of video or audio recording?	☒	☐
6	Use of computer-generated log files?	☒	☐
7	Participant observation with their knowledge?	☒	☐
8	Participant observation without their knowledge?	☐	☒
9	Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	☐	☒
10	Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally or emotionally harmful / offensive?	☒	☐
11	Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	☐	☒
12	Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	☐	☒
13	Use of procedures that involve deception?	☐	☒
14	Administration of any substance, agent or placebo?	☐	☒
15	Working with live vertebrate animals?	☐	☒
16	Procedures that may have a negative impact on the environment?	☐	☒
17	Other primary data collection methods. Please indicate the type of data collection method(s) below.		
Details of any other primary data collection method: Reflective field notes will be used by the researcher to document contextual relevance of levels of perceived effectiveness, feasibility, and accessibility. No confidential or non-public documents will be accessed. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		☒	☐

SECTION G: Research Participants

Research participants include people who will be taking part in your research as providers of research data (e.g. being interviewed, answering questionnaires, or doing user testing of hardware or software). This includes animal participants.

1	Does your research involve human or non-human participants?	YES	Continue this section	NO	Click to continue to section N
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Participant numbers and source

How will you ensure an appropriately convened sample group in order to meet the aims of the research? Give details for subgroups separately, if appropriate. How will any potential pitfalls, for example dual roles or potential for coercion, be addressed?

1	How many participants will be recruited and how was the number decided upon?	I plan to recruit 8-10 subjects to undertake every aspect of the “A Voice Becoming...” program created in the artefact from Module 5. I will attempt to engage two extra participants in case of attrition. I believe this number of participants will allow for some rich insights into the potential feasibility of the program and ideal delivery protocols without creating overly taxing data collection and analysis. Participation will be entirely voluntary. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
2	Who will the participants be?	The participants will be independent, early career female singer-songwriters, 18+, but mostly in their 20s. They will be actively pursuing a professional career in music. No participants under 18 will be included. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
3	How will you identify the participants?	The participants will not be signed with a major record company, although some may have limited publishing company support. Participants will be identified through appropriate professional, educational, or practitioner networks. They will be approached with clear written information about the study and invited to participate voluntarily. No recruitment will take place through assessment relationships or any direct position of authority where this could create pressure to participate. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
4	Will you be excluding any groups of people, and if so what is the rationale for that?	I will be excluding any female artist currently signed to a major record label because those artists have a designated team assisting them with daily administrative tasks which eases the

		amount of work on the typical artist's plate. I will also exclude any young artist under the age of 18, or individuals who may be considered vulnerable in relation to this project. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
5	Will the research involve any element of deception? If yes, please describe why this is necessary and whether participants will be informed at the end of the study	No. There will be no elements of deception in this research. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
6	Describe whether participants will be able to withdraw from the study, and up to what point (eg if data is to be anonymised). If withdrawal is not possible, after a certain point, explain why not.	Participants can withdraw until data is anonymised and incorporated into the wider dataset. The withdrawal point will be clearly explained in the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
7	How long will the participant have to decide whether to take part in the research?	<i>Participants will have two weeks to decide whether they would like to participate in the program. They will have estimated daily time commitments up front. The program is flexible and self-paced and can be done on their own time which may afford them convenience in their schedules.</i> <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
8	What arrangements have been made for participants who might have difficulties understanding verbal explanations or written information, or who have particular communication needs that should be taken into account to facilitate their involvement in the research?	<i>While by occupational nature participants in this study are likely strong writers and communicators, should any participant have difficulty understanding verbal or written information, I will be available to answer any questions via email about any protocols or instructions that are not clearly communicated. Information will be provided clearly in written form and participants may ask questions during before or during participation. Additional time will be offered where needed. Participation remains open throughout.</i> <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>

SECTION H: Research with Vulnerable People

1	Are your participants classed as vulnerable people?	YES	Click to continue to appendix 4	NO	Continue to the next section
2	Have you completed appendix 4?	YES	☐	NO	X

SECTION I: Research Involving Animals

1	Are your participants non-human animals?	YES	Click to continue to appendix 5	NO	Continue to the next section
2	Have you completed appendix 5?	YES	☐	NO	X

SECTION J: Research with the Prison Service or the Probation Service

1	Are your participants staff or offenders within the Prison Service or the Probation service?	YES	Click to continue to appendix 6	NO	Continue to the next section
2	Have you completed appendix 6?	YES	☐	NO	X

SECTION K: Health and Social Care Research

1	Are your participants selected due to their health or social care needs?	YES	Click to continue to appendix 7	NO	Continue to the next section
2	Have you completed appendix 7?	YES	☐	NO	X

SECTION L: Types of Personal Data

Personal Data		YES	NO
Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 and the Data Protection Act 2018)?			
1	Personal data means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'). An identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person. Any video or audio recordings of participants and transcription of such are considered to be personal data. If you ticked YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:	X	☐
I will employ both video and audio recordings of participant interviews and the transcription of these recordings, and these are personal data and highly relevant to the qualitative nature of my research. While audio/video recordings can't truly be anonymized at capture, they will be securely stored and deleted once transcribed. Participant findings will then be anonymised but I will protect participant identity according to the rules of ethical conduct. However, minimal personal data will be collected on consent forms only (for example, participant name and signature where required to document informed consent).			

Special Category Data		YES	NO
Does the research involve the processing of special category data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 and the Data Protection Act 2018)?			
2	Racial or ethnic origin	☐	☒
3	Political opinions	☐	☒
4	Religious or philosophical beliefs	☐	☒
5	Genetic, biometric or health data	☒	☐
6	Sex life or sexual orientation	☐	☒
7	Trade union membership	☐	☒
If you ticked YES to any of questions L2-L7, provide a description of the data and explain why this special category data needs to be collected to support the research and that it is in the public interest to do so:			
8	Because a large majority of early stage, independent female singer-songwriters suffer from mental health concerns such as anxiety, this theme may emerge in the research. However, all responses will be anonymised and will not request names, contact details, employer details, or other direct identifiers. The only personal data will be on consent forms, which will be stored securely and separately from anonymized research data.		
9	Please describe how the research has been designed to gather the minimum amount of personal data necessary for the specified research purpose:		
No identifying information will be collected within the research dataset itself. Questionnaire responses will be anonymised and will not request names, contact details, employer details, or other direct identifiers. The only personal data collected will be on consent forms, which will be stored securely and separately from anonymized research data.			
10	Demonstrate that the processing is not likely to cause substantial damage or distress to individuals and that their interests will be safeguarded:		
The processing involved in this project is low risk. Participants may omit any question they do not wish to answer, and the study does not request sensitive personal, medical, or performance-management data. Risks will be minimized through clear explanation of the study, voluntary participation, right to withdraw, separation of consent forms from research data, and secure storage and anonymization.			
11	Demonstrate that the data will not be used to take any action or make decisions in relation to the individuals concerned:		
The data will not be used to evaluate, judge, or make decisions about any individual participant. Findings will be presented in anonymized, thematic form only and will be used exclusively for academic research purposes.			
12	Data should be anonymised wherever possible, either at point of capture or once collated. If the data cannot be anonymised, and if pseudonymisation is not possible, demonstrate why that is possible. If special category data cannot be anonymised, explicit consent to share that data must normally be obtained.		

All research data will be anonymized as early as possible. Questionnaire responses will be anonymous at the point of collection. Any incidental identifiers in notes will be removed during processing. Consent forms will be stored separately and will not be linked back to anonymized responses.

13	If special category data cannot be anonymised, will you obtain explicit consent to share that data?	YES	NO	N/A
		☒	☐	☐

SECTION M: Participant Information and Consent

Information for participants It is normally expected that those participating in research should do so having given their informed consent. If this is not appropriate or practical, explicit justification must be provided, in line with prevailing disciplinary conventions. Please note however, that informed consent to participate in the research is separate from consent to process (e.g. collect, analyse, store, reuse or share) personal data, as VSC's lawful basis for processing personal data in research activities is part of its 'public task'.		YES	NO	N/A
1	Will you obtain written consent for participation?	☒	☐	☐
2	Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	☒	☐	☐
3	Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	☒	☐	☐
4	Will you explain to participants that refusal to participate in the research will not affect their treatment or education (if relevant)?	☒	☐	☐
5	If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	☒	☐	☐
6	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	☒	☐	☐
7	Will participants be made aware of how you will treat any information that may reasonably be considered as confidential?	☒	☐	☐
8	If your research requires your participants to sign up for a service provided by an external company or organisation will you inform them that their data may be stored and processed outside VSC?	☒	☐	☐
9	Will you give participants the VSC Privacy Notice for Research ?	☒	☐	☐
If you have answered NO to any of questions M1-M8, please provide justification detailing why this is necessary for the research.				
10				
Informed consent: Describe the arrangements to inform potential participants, before providing consent, of what is involved in participating. Describe the arrangements for participants to provide full consent before the research begins. If gaining consent in this way is inappropriate, explain how consent will be obtained and recorded.				
11	Potential participants will be provided with a clear Participant Information Sheet before taking part. This will explain: The purpose of the research			

	• What participation involves • That participation is voluntary • The right to withdraw • How data will be used and stored • Any foreseeable risks or limitations to confidentiality Participants will provide written consent before contributing any research data.				
Confidentiality: Confidential information refers to information that can be related to an identifiable individual, whether living or deceased, which is not in the public domain and which is given with the expectation that it will be kept confidential. Under Common Law when an individual entrusts a researcher or research team with confidential information, the team must handle this in line with 'reasonable expectations'. In other words, confidential information should only normally be shared when there would be 'no surprises' for the individuals concerned. Where participants would not expect the researcher to be sharing their confidential information with others, researchers can manage their expectations by informing them of their intentions (e.g. in the participant information sheet or during discussions about participation) and asking them if they are happy with these plans. They should understand what is being proposed and what this might mean for them, before they decide whether the researcher can share their confidential information with others.					
Please detail how you will treat confidential information:					
12	Confidentiality and anonymity will be prioritized throughout the project. No identifying information will be included within the research dataset. Consent forms will be stored separately from anonymized data. Any potentially identifiable references in written responses or field notes will be removed or generalized. Participants will be referred to only by pseudonyms or neutral descriptors in written outputs. Confidentiality will be maintained unless disclosure indicates a serious safeguarding or legal concern, in which case appropriate institutional procedures will apply.				
Copies of any written consent form, written information and all other explanatory material should accompany this application. If you have included these then please list the documents included here.					
13	Participant Information Sheet Participant Consent Form Questionnaire schedule/questionnaire sheet				
14	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Consent form attached?</td> <td>YES ☒</td> <td>NO ☐</td> <td>N/A ☐</td> </tr> </table>	Consent form attached?	YES ☒	NO ☐	N/A ☐
Consent form attached?	YES ☒	NO ☐	N/A ☐		

SECTION N: Research with Potential Military Application

1	Does your research have any potential military application?	YES	Click to continue to appendix 8	NO	Continue to the next section
2	Have you completed appendix 8?	YES	☐	NO	X

SECTION O: Use of Artificial Intelligence Tools

Use of generative AI and other AI-based tools There are a number of ethical issues relating to the use of generative AI and other AI-based tools, including data security, output bias, and output errors. In general you should assume that any generative AI or other AI-	YES	NO	N/A
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based tool that you pay to use is more secure and accurate than one which is free to use.				
Will the research use AI tools to do any of the following:				
1	Capture data?	☒	☐	☐
2	Generate and/or edit text?	☒	☐	☐
3	Generate graphics?	☐	☒	☐
4	Generate video?	☐	☒	☐
5	Generate sound/music?	☐	☒	☐
6	Generate code?	☐	☒	☐
7	Generate synthetic data?	☐	☒	☐
8	Analyse data?	☒	☐	☐
9	Analyse personal or sensitive data?	☐	☒	☐
10	Classify data?	☒	☐	☐
11	Do you intend to use the free version of any AI tools?	☐	☒	☐
If you have answered YES to any of questions O1-O11, please provide justification detailing why this is necessary for the research.				
12	I will likely use AI to capture a transcript of participant interviews as a backup for the recording because it automatically transcribes all of my lessons and meetings on Zoom, and while I do use Grammarly to edit text, I do not use it to generate text. While I would never use AI to analyze personal or sensitive data, using AI to check my coding and classification work might be a nice backup so I can double check my analysis, however, in no way would I rely on it to base a research study on. In other words, I will do my own work but may use AI to check said work. Any AI used like Granola and Grammarly, is paid for.			

Section P: Research Data Management Plan

1	Data Summary
The project will generate qualitative data in the form of anonymized written questionnaire responses, researcher field notes, and reflective notes. Consent forms will be stored separately as personal data for the purposes of documenting informed consent.	
2	Responsibilities
The principal researcher will be responsible for data management, including secure storage, anonymization, organization, and deletion in line with US data protection expectations, University policy, and UK GDPR requirements. Supervisors may access anonymized material if required for academic guidance.	

3	Assessment of existing data
No confidential existing datasets will be used. Publicly available documents may be consulted for contextual understanding where relevant. The primary data required for the project will be generated during the study.	
4	Management and curation of data
Data will be organized using non-identifiable participant codes. Consent forms will be stored separately from research data. Digital files will be labelled clearly and stored in password-protected folders.	
5	Quality assurance of data
Quality checks will be carried out during data organization and thematic coding. The researcher will review coding decisions iteratively and maintain reflective notes to support consistency and transparency.	
6	Short-term data storage
Paper materials will be stored securely in a locked location. Digital files will be stored in password-protected storage with appropriate backup arrangements.	
7	Long-term data storage and preservation
Because this is a taught Master's project, long-term archiving of raw research data is not anticipated. Data will be retained only for the period required by University policy and then securely destroyed. All data will be deleted by no later than 3 month following the completion date of the study.	
8	Documentation and metadata
- What documentation and metadata will accompany the data? - How will the data be documented during research to provide high quality contextual information and/or structured metadata for secondary users? A simple coding framework, reflexive notes, and dated file records will accompany the dataset to support transparency and organization.	
9	Data sharing
- If you plan to share your research data explain how it will be shared and the value it will have to others - If you are planning to share the data, please advise when you will be releasing it. - Are any restrictions on data sharing required? - Identify any potential obstacles to sharing your data, explain which and the possible measures you can apply to overcome these - If the data will have value to different audiences, how these groups will be informed? - Will the data need to be updated? Include future plans for updating if this is the case.	

Will the data be open or will you charge for it? Justify if charging to access the data. Raw data will not be shared publicly. Findings will be reported only in anonymized and aggregated form within the dissertation and any associated academic assessment.	
10	Copyright and intellectual property ownership Who will own the copyright and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) of any new data that you will generate? The researcher will own the copyright of newly generated academic work, subject to relevant University regulations. Publicly available materials consulted remain under their original copyright.
11	Resources - What resources will you require to deliver your plan? - Costs of storage – why are these appropriate? - How will these be met? (costs related to long term storage will be normally permitted by funders providing these are fully justified and relate to the project) No additional specialist resources are required beyond standard secure digital storage and ordinary study materials.

SECTION Q: Risk Assessment

Outline any anticipated risks that may adversely affect any of the participants, the researchers, VSC and/or the University, and the steps that will be taken to address them. If you have completed a full risk assessment (for example as required by a laboratory, or external research collaborator) you may append that to this form.			
1	Full risk assessment completed and appended?	YES	NO
		☐	☒
Risks to participants, researchers, and the University			
2	Social risks: <i>disclosures that could affect participants standing in the community, in their family and their job.</i>	YES	NO
		☐	☒
Risk: There is a small possibility that participants may feel hesitant about sharing views relating to workload, training, or professional expectations.		How will you address any risks? <i>Participation is voluntary, data will be anonymized, and no identifiable employer, institution, or individual will be named in outputs.</i>	

3	Legal risks: activities that could result in the participant, researchers and / or University committing an offence; activities that might lead to a participant disclosing criminal activity to a researcher which would necessitate reporting to enforcement authorities; activities that could result in a civil claim for compensation	YES	NO
		☐	☒
Risk: <i>The study does not intentionally seek legally sensitive material, though participants could mention workplace concerns in general terms.</i>		How will you address any risks? <i>Questions are non-probing and participants will be advised not to disclose confidential or contract-sensitive information unnecessarily.</i>	
4	Economic harm: financial harm to participant, researcher and / or University through disclosure or other event.	YES	NO
		☐	☒
Risk: <i>Minimal. Any possible risk would arise only if identifiable data were mishandled.</i>		How will you address any risks? <i>No identifiable organizational data will be included in the dataset. Research data will be anonymized and reported at group level only.</i>	
5	Reputational risk: damage to public perception of VSC/ Essex University or the University / researchers' reputation in the eyes of funders, the research community and / or the general public.	YES	NO
		☐	☒
Risk: <i>There is a small possibility that the findings could be misinterpreted if presented without sufficient context.</i>		How will you address any risks? <i>All reporting will be generalized, academic, and anonymized. The study is exploratory and not designed to evaluate specific organizations or individuals.</i>	
6	Safeguarding risks: Risk to young people, vulnerable adults and / or researcher from improper behaviour, abuse or exploitation. Risk to researcher of being in a comprising situation, in which there might be accusations of improper behaviour.	YES	NO
		☐	☒
Risk: <i>Minimal: The project involves consenting adults only.</i> <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		How will you address any risks? <i>The study excludes children and vulnerable groups. The researcher will maintain clear professional boundaries and follow institutional safeguarding processes if any concern were to arise.</i>	
7	Sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics. If research activity may include sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics or issues likely to disclose information requiring further action (e.g. criminal activity), give details of the procedures to deal with these issues, including any support/advice (e.g. helpline numbers) to be offered to participants. Note that where applicable, consent procedures should	YES	NO
		☒	☐

	<i>make it clear that if something potentially or actually illegal is discovered in the course of a project, it may need to be disclosed to the proper authorities.</i>		
Participants could become emotionally triggered when engaging in reflective journaling practices. Some participants may experience mild discomfort when reflecting on workload, confidence, or vocal well-being. There would be no instance where participants would disclose information requiring further action like criminal activity, as information gleaned through this study will directly relate to the effectiveness and/or challenges of the program itself, and its delivery, not the participants' detailed individual reflections. However, I will absolutely include helpline numbers, such as the MusiCares Help Line 1-800-687-4227, and help@musicares.org, and well-recognized program information to participants for their support and include a statement regarding illegal activities requiring further action to the proper authorities. Participants may skip questions, stop participation at any time, or withdraw within the stated withdrawal period. Questions are open and non-invasive.			
	Health and safety risks		
8	Location hazards: for example: fire; visiting or working in participant's homes; working in remote locations and in high crime areas; overseas travel; hot, cold or extreme weather conditions; working on or by water. Also hazardous work locations, such as construction sites, confined spaces, roofs or laboratories. For overseas travel, researchers will need to check country / city specific information, travel health requirements and consider emergency arrangements as part of their research planning. In all cases the University's International Travel Policy must be followed.	YES	NO
		☐	☒
Risk: <i>No unusual hazards beyond ordinary educational or studio environments are anticipated.</i>		How will you address any risks? <i>Any in-person activity will take place in ordinary, appropriate, low-risk settings.</i>	
9	Activity hazards: for example: potentially mentally harmful activities; distressing and stressful work and content; driving; tripping, or slipping; falling from height; physically demanding work; lifting, carrying, pushing and pulling loads; night time and weekend working.	YES	NO
		☒	☐
Risk: <i>Participants could possibly become triggered by their own reflective journaling topics as mentioned in question Q7.</i>		How will you address any risks? <i>I will include the MusiCares mental health helpline number 1-800-687-4227 and help@musicares.org for participant support.</i>	
10	Machinery and equipment: for example: ergonomic hazards, including computer workstations and equipment; contact with electricity; contact with moving, rotating, ejecting or cutting parts in machinery and instruments; accidental release of energy from machines and instruments.	YES	NO
		☐	☒
Risk:		How will you address any risks?	

<i>No specialist machinery or hazardous equipment is used.</i>		<i>Only ordinary educational materials or standard digital tools are used.</i>	
11	Chemicals and other hazardous substances: <i>the use, production, storage, waste, transportation and accidental release of chemicals and hazardous substances; flammable, dangerous and explosive substances; asphyxiating gases; allergens; biological agents, blood and blood products.</i>	YES	NO
		☐	☒
<i>Risk:</i> N/A		<i>How will you address any risks?</i> N/A	
12	Physical agents: <i>for example: excessive noise exposure, hand-arm vibration and whole body vibration; ionising radiation; lasers; artificial optical radiation and electromagnetic fields</i>	YES	NO
		☐	☒
<i>Risk:</i> None beyond ordinary environments.		<i>How will you address any risks?</i> N/A	
13	Environmental risks: <i>for example: accidental spillage of pollutants, damage to local ecosystems</i>	YES	NO
		☐	☒
<i>Risk:</i> N/A		<i>How will you address any risks?</i> N/A	

SECTION R: Disclosure and Barring Service

Disclosure and Barring Service				
1	If the research activity involves children or vulnerable adults, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate must be obtained before any contact with such participants.	YES	NO	N/A
	Does your research require you to hold a current DBS Certificate?	☐	☒	☐
2	If YES, please give the certificate number. If the certificate number is not available please write "Pending"; in this case any ethical approval will be subject to providing the appropriate certificate number.			

SECTION S: Declaration

The information which I have provided is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have attempted to identify any risks and issues related to the research activity and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants.

In submitting this application I hereby confirm that I undertake to ensure that the above named research activity will meet VSC's Research Ethics and Integrity Policy which is located in the Ethics tile on Canvas.

1	Name of applicant	Sharon Lea Ericksen
2	Electronic or written signature of applicant:	Sharon Lea Ericksen
3	Date	July 9, 2026
4	Name of Director of Studies	
5	Electronic or written signature of Director of Studies:	
6	Date	

Checklist: Please complete the checklist below to ensure that you have completed the form according to the guidelines and attached any required documentation:

1	☒	I have read the guidance notes supplied before completing the form.
2	☒	I have completed all relevant sections of the form in full.
3	☒	I have attached a copy of the Participant Information Sheet (PIS) or Consent Form
4	☒	I have attached a completed copy of the Trusted Research and Innovation Checklist (where applicable)
5	☐	I have attached a full risk assessment (where appropriate)
6	☒	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the above named research activity will meet VSC's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice
7	☒	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the above named research activity will meet VSC's Research Data Management Policy
8	☒	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the above named research activity will meet VSC's Research Export Control Policy

9	☒	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the above named research activity will meet VSC's Open Access Research Policy							
10	I have completed the following appendices:	1	☐	2	☐	3	☒	4	☐
		5	☐	6	☐	7	☐	8	☐

All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing via Canvas messaging with the title 'Ethical Approval' followed by your name.

ETHICS FORM APPENDIX 1 – Grant or Contract Funding

A1.1	Has your research been awarded external funding?	YES	☐	NO	☐
A1.2	Have you applied for funding / awaiting decision?	YES	☐	NO	☐
A1.3	Are you intending to apply for funding?	YES	☐	NO	☐
A1.4	Funding Body				
A1.5	Lead institution (grant holder)				
A1.6	If awarded, grant reference				
A1.7	If awarded, grant value				
A1.8	If awarded, start date and duration				

[Return to the main form](#)

ETHICS FORM APPENDIX 2: External Collaborative Research Activity

INSTITUTION 1					
A2.1	Name				
A2.2	Researcher name and position				
A2.3	Role in project (e.g. co-investigator)				
A2.4	Contact e-mail address				
A2.5	External Ethical Approval <i>Please detail the ethical approval required and arrangements for this partner. See Section 14 of the VSC Research Ethics and Integrity Policy. If approved, please supply confirmation.</i>	Obtained?	YES	NO	PENDING
			☐	☐	☐

INSTITUTION 2					
A2.6	Name				
A2.7	Researcher name and position				
A2.8	Role in project (e.g. co-investigator)				
A2.9	Contact e-mail address				
A2.10	External Ethical Approval <i>Please detail the ethical approval required and arrangements for this partner. See Section 14 of the VSC Research Ethics and Integrity Policy. If approved, please supply confirmation.</i>	Obtained?	YES	NO	PENDING
			☐	☐	☐

INSTITUTION 3					
A2.11	Name				
A2.12	Researcher name and position				
A2.13	Role in project (e.g. co-investigator)				
A2.14	Contact e-mail address				
A2.15	External Ethical Approval <i>Please detail the ethical approval required and arrangements for this partner. See Section 14 of the VSC Research Ethics and Integrity Policy. If approved, please supply confirmation.</i>	Obtained?	YES	NO	PENDING
			☐	☐	☐

Add additional collaborators as needed

[Return to the main form](#)

ETHICS FORM APPENDIX 3: Research Undertaken Outside of the UK

A3.1	Research activity outside of the UK If research activity will take place overseas, you are responsible for ensuring that local ethical considerations are complied with and that the relevant permissions are sought. Specify any local guidelines (e.g. from local professional associations/learned societies/universities) that exist and whether these involve any ethical stipulations beyond those usual in the UK (provide details of any licenses or permissions required). Also specify whether there are any specific ethical issues raised by the local context in which the research activity is taking place, for example, particular cultural and/or legal sensitivities or vulnerabilities of participants. Describe the measures you have taken to comply with these and provide evidence of approvals etc. If you live in the country where
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	you will do the research then please state this. If you have a local research supervisor or research advisor then please give their contact details here.	
I live in the United States where this research will take place. This project is practice-based work undertaken as part of a taught postgraduate module for teaching and learning development, rather than independently funded or organizational research. Having reviewed the US Institutional Review board (IRB) framework, I note that IRB review is not required for practicum, teaching, or learning-development activities of this kind. All participants take part in this research entirely by their own free will, and the project will otherwise be conducted in line with UWTSD's ethical and data protection requirements, aligned where relevant with US data protection expectations for participants based in the US.		
	Responsible Research and Innovation	
A3.2	If research is taking place overseas please refer to the VSC Trusted Research and Innovation Policy and complete the Trusted Research and Innovation Checklist and submit it with this form.	
A3.3	Confirm that you have read the Trusted Research and Innovation Policy	☒

If you are a postgraduate research student working with a research supervisor or research advisor at your local university then you do not need to fill in any more sections of this appendix.
If you are working in a research collaboration with an overseas partner please complete the remaining sections of this appendix.

[Return to the main form](#)

Organisational Details	
A3.4	Name of Organisation
A3.5	Country where organisation is based:
A3.6	Registration number and name of registration body (examples of relevant registration bodies are government, tax, corporation, charity, educational authority):

<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	
A3.7	What is the legal status of the organisation? (for example: public university, private university, charity, private company, non-profit making company, government research organisation, independent research organisation) Please include the date of foundation. Note: We may be required to ask for evidence of this at a later stage.
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	
A3.8	Is your organisation affiliated to any other organisation? (i.e. is the organisation legally part of a larger organisation or a group of larger organisations).
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	
A3.9	Name(s) of investigators in the organisation who will be responsible for the collaborative research and innovation
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	

About New Partners	
A3.10	Why does a partner want to work with you?
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	
A3.11	What are they expecting in return for their financial support or involvement?
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	

A3.12	Is the organisation associated with a country which may be viewed as hostile to the UK or one which has different democratic and ethical values from our own? If you have ticked YES, please briefly describe below how you will maintain the UK's democratic and ethical values within the research.	YES	NO
		☐	☐
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			
A3.13	Has due diligence into the partner identified any involvement in research on behalf of the military or police with links to a hostile state? If you have ticked YES, please summarise below how you will prevent information from this research from being released to these organisations.	YES	NO
		☐	☐
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			
A3.14	Set within the context of any information gained from due diligence, could your research be misused or have unintended applications which would be negative? If you have ticked YES, please summarise below how this might occur.	YES	NO
		☐	☐
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			
A3.15	Are there any legal, regulatory or university policy constraints on undertaking your research with this partner? If you have ticked YES, please summarise these below.	YES	NO
		☐	☐
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			
A3.16	Having considered the answers to questions A3.10-A3.15, are there potential reputational or ethical risks to you or the university? If you have ticked YES, please summarise these risks below.	YES	NO
		☐	☐
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			

About Research Relationships		YES	NO
A3.17	Are the terms of any proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in keeping with the expectations of your department and university?	☐	☐
A3.18	Are you providing existing intellectual property (IP), research data, confidential or personally identifiable data to the project? If so, how is this going to be protected?	☐	☐

A3.19	Who will own any IP that is generated?
A3.20	What plans do you have in place for protecting the resulting IP?
A3.21	What contractual requirements are you able to put in place to protect the interests of your academic institutions?
A3.22	What access will the research partner have to your IT network? If they do have access, what broader visibility might this provide?
A3.23	Is there any physical separation or protection required between research in similar fields?

About Existing Partners			
A3.24	Would proceeding with the research raise potential conflicts of interest with existing research partners? If you have ticked YES, please explain these conflicts below.	YES	NO
		☐	☐
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			
A3.25	Have you spoken with your existing partners about any potential conflict of interest? If you have ticked YES, please briefly summarise their response(s) below.	YES	NO
		☐	☐
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			
A3.26	Does any non-disclosure agreement for this project include an expectation that you will need to provide visibility to existing partners? If you have ticked YES, please explain below how this will be managed.	YES	NO
		☐	☐

<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			
A3.27	Will this research breach any existing contractual agreements that you, your department or university already have? If you have ticked YES, please explain below how this will be managed.	YES	NO
		☐	☐
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			

[Return to the main form](#)

ETHICS FORM APPENDIX 4: Research with Vulnerable People

Will the research involve data processing involving the following data subjects:		YES	NO
A4.1	Children under 16	☐	☐
A4.2	Adults with learning disabilities	☐	☐
A4.3	Adults with other forms of mental incapacity or mental illness	☐	☐
A4.4	Adults in emergency situations	☐	☐
A4.5	Prisoners or young offenders	☐	☐
A4.6	Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator, e.g. members of staff, students	☐	☐
A4.7	People who have not given their explicit consent to participate in the project	☐	☐
A4.8	People engaged in illegal activities	☐	☐
A4.9	Any other people who can be considered vulnerable in the context of this project	☐	☐
Please justify the inclusion of the above people (if applicable), explaining why the research cannot be conducted on non-vulnerable people.			
A4.10	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

Please give details of extra steps taken to assure the protection of vulnerable people participating in the research. You should describe any arrangements to be made for obtaining consent from a legal representative.				
A4.11	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			
It is the researcher's responsibility to check whether a DBS check (or equivalent) is required and to obtain one if it is needed. Please confirm:				
A4.12	DBS Check required?	YES	NO	
		☐	☐	
A4.13	DBS certificate obtained?	YES	NO	N/A
		☐	☐	☐

[Return to the main form](#)

ETHICS FORM APPENDIX 5: Research Involving Animals

The use of animals in research is tightly governed and monitored by law and by the Home Office, specifically under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 and its accompanying codes of practice and processes. The Act regulates procedures that are carried out on protected animals for scientific or educational purposes that may cause pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm. Under the Act, a protected animal is 'any living vertebrate, other than man, and any living cephalopod'. VSC does not hold a Home Office issued Establishment Licence and therefore researchers must ensure that any proposed work involving animals is either exempt from the Act or falls outside of its scope. Exempted research, for example involving routine veterinary practice or clinical veterinary research, may still require external ethical approval from the Royal Society of Veterinary Surgeons. When undertaking collaborative research involving animals, the VSC Research Ethics Committee must be assured that the partner institution(s) conform to the appropriate regulatory framework or legislation, and have approval from their local Research Ethics Committee. Any such work must follow the guidance of the National Centre for the Replacement, Reduction and Refinement of Animals in Research, known as the 3Rs. In all cases, advice must be sought from INSPIRE for any proposed research involving animals, either at VSC, or by research collaborators in partnership with VSC. This should be at the very early stages of research design, so that an appropriate due diligence exercise can be undertaken.			
Will the research involve any work with any of the following animals (including observation in their natural habitat)		YES	NO
A5.1	Any living vertebrates, other than humans?	☐	☐
A5.2	Any living cephalopods?	☐	☐
A5.3	Has INSPIRE undertaken an initial due diligence exercise?	☐	☐
A5.4	Due diligence assessment appended to this application?	☐	☐

Please provide a summary of the due diligence exercise, noting arrangements for compliance with the necessary regulatory frameworks and legislation. Please append the full due diligence assessment from INSPIRE.

A5.5

(this box should expand as you type)

[Return to the main form](#)

ETHICS FORM APPENDIX 6: Research with Staff or Offenders in Prison Establishments and Probation Services

Research with staff and/or offenders in prison establishments, the Probation Service or within His Majesty's Prison and Probation Services requires additional approvals.

Will the research involve any of the following?		YES	NO
A6.1	Staff in prison establishments	☐	☐
A6.2	Offenders in prison establishments	☐	☐
A6.3	The Probation Service	☐	☐
A6.4	His Majesty's Prison and Probation Services	☐	☐

All researchers wanting to conduct research with staff and/or offenders in prison establishments, the Probation Service regions or within HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) Headquarters are required to formally apply for research approval to the HMPPS National Research Committee (NRC). Before doing so, INSPIRE must undertake an initial due diligence exercise. If you have not contacted INSPIRE, please do so immediately. If YES to any of the above, please confirm:

A6.5	Has INSPIRE undertaken an initial due diligence exercise?	☐	☐
A6.6	Have you applied to the HMPPS National Research Committee (NRC)?	☐	☐
A6.7	Has HMPPS National Research Committee approval been granted? If yes, please append to this application.	☐	☐
A6.8	Due diligence assessment appended to this application?	☐	☐

Please provide a summary of the due diligence exercise, noting arrangements for compliance with the necessary regulatory frameworks and legislation. Please append the full due diligence assessment from INSPIRE.

A6.9

[Return to the main form](#)

ETHICS FORM APPENDIX 7: Health and Social Care Research

All health and social care research must have a sponsor as defined by the Health Research Authority UK Policy Framework for Health & Social Care. VSC will under no circumstances act as the sponsor of health and social care research (i.e. that which requires approval by a NHS Research Ethics Committee). In all cases, therefore, an appropriate collaborating partner must lead the research. Any health and social care research therefore requires an initial due diligence exercise, which will be undertaken by INSPIRE. The purpose of the due diligence exercise is to ensure that the University has the capability to undertake the research, either independently or in collaboration with research partners. This will include advice on suitable collaborative arrangements and the appropriate involvement of VSC researchers in the proposed research study. This is likely to apply to the following areas:			
Will the data processing involve:		YES	NO
A7.1	Participants who have been recruited on the basis of medical and health conditions, life stage or other physical or mental attribute.	☐	☐
A7.2	Participants who will engage in physical exercise, activity or exertion of any kind, or who use exercise equipment, assistive devices or other apparatus for the purposes of the research study. This includes interventions that are minimally invasive.	☐	☐
A7.3	Patients and users of the NHS (including NHS patients treated in the private sector).	☐	☐
A7.4	Individuals identified as potential participants because of their status as relatives or carers of patients and users of the NHS.	☐	☐
A7.5	Patients who are cared for in private and voluntary sector nursing homes.	☐	☐
A7.6	Confidential patient information.	☐	☐
A7.7	Clinical trial of a medicinal product or medical device.	☐	☐
A7.8	Access to organs or other bodily material of past and present NHS patients, or any material consisting of or containing human cells.	☐	☐
A7.9	Use of human tissue (including non-NHS sources) where the collection is not covered by a Human Tissue Authority licence.	☐	☐
A7.10	Foetal material and IVF involving NHS patients.	☐	☐
A7.11	The recently deceased under NHS care.	☐	☐
A7.12	NHS staff or premises.	☐	☐
A7.13	Practising midwives conducting a clinical trial.	☐	☐
A7.14	Investigational medicinal product.	☐	☐
A7.15	Medical devices that are not CE-marked or CE-marked medical devices that have been modified or are being used for a new purpose.	☐	☐
A7.16	Exposure to ionising radiation.	☐	☐
A7.17	Other health and social care related research.	☐	☐
Please specify			
Researchers proposing to work on projects involving health and social care research must check whether their study meets the HRA definition of research and whether it should undergo ethics review by a NHS			

Research Ethics Committee. If you have answered YES to any of questions A7.1-A7.17 then this is likely to be the case and sponsorship by a third party will be required. This can be checked via the Health Research Authority's Decision Tool : https://www.hra-decisiontools.org.uk/research/				
A7.18	Does the research meet the HRA definition of research?	YES ☐	NO ☐	N/A ☐
A7.19	Is the Research being sponsored by a collaborating partner?	YES ☐	NO ☐	N/A ☐
A7.20	Has NHS ethics approval been granted?	YES ☐	NO ☐	N/A ☐
A7.21	Has INSPIRE undertaken an initial due diligence exercise?	YES ☐		NO ☐
Please provide a summary of the due diligence exercise, noting arrangements for compliance with the necessary regulatory frameworks and legislation. Please append the full due diligence assessment from INSPIRE. If you have not contacted INSPIRE, please do immediately.				
A7.22				

A7.23	Have you been granted NHS ethical approval?	YES	Click to continue to Section R	NO	Return to the main form
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ETHICS FORM APPENDIX 8: Export Control for Research with Potential Military End Uses

Export controls apply to the physical, electronic or oral transmission outside the UK of applied research, sensitive technology, software and equipment that could potentially be misused, either directly or indirectly, for military purposes. These legal controls are a serious obligation and VSC researchers must actively manage the risks of these being misused to fuel conflict, threaten national security, support terrorism and crime, violate human rights or proliferate Weapons of Mass Destruction. VSC's Export Control Policy provides a clear six step process to determine if your research is covered by export controls. Please complete the following screening to judge if you need to complete a full export control assessment. If you are in any doubt, then please contact INSPIRE. Any research in VSC involving the following high-risk areas must be screened. Will the research involve:				
Defence			YES	NO
A8.1	Military equipment and munitions		☐	☐
A8.2	Defence equipment, including satellites		☐	☐
A8.3	Technical data, including some border and port information		☐	☐
A8.4	Dual use research		☐	☐
Materials and Technologies			YES	NO
A8.5	Nuclear materials, facilities and equipment		☐	☐
A8.6	Chemicals, microorganisms and toxins		☐	☐

A8.7	Electronics design, development and production	☐	☐
A8.8	Computers	☐	☐
A8.9	Telecommunications	☐	☐
A8.10	Sensors and lasers	☐	☐
A8.11	Navigation and avionics	☐	☐
A8.12	Marine technology	☐	☐
A8.13	Composite materials	☐	☐
A8.14	Aerospace and propulsion	☐	☐
Sensitive Information		YES	NO
A8.15	Cryptology	☐	☐
A8.16	Counterterrorism	☐	☐
A8.17	Counternarcotics	☐	☐
A8.18	Cyber-related	☐	☐
A8.19	Non-proliferation	☐	☐
A8.20	Transnational criminal organisations	☐	☐

Genetic Resources		YES	NO
A8.21	Genetic material of actual or potential value	☐	☐
A8.22	Organisms, or parts thereof	☐	☐
A8.23	Populations (or organisms)	☐	☐
A8.24	Other biotic components of ecosystems	☐	☐
A8.25	Domesticated or cultivated species in which the evolutionary process has been influenced by humans	☐	☐

Will you be exporting military or dual-use technology, now or possibly in the future? This information may take many forms, including:		YES	NO
A8.26	Physical transfer of goods, technologies, material or equipment	☐	☐
A8.27	Blueprints	☐	☐
A8.28	Plans	☐	☐
A8.29	Diagrams	☐	☐
A8.30	Models	☐	☐

A8.31	Formulae	☐	☐
A8.32	Tables	☐	☐
A8.33	Engineering designs and specifications	☐	☐
A8.34	Manuals and instructions	☐	☐
A8.35	Software	☐	☐
A8.36	Know-how	☐	☐

Will your project transfer technology using any of the following physical methods?		YES	NO
A8.37	USB flash drives	☐	☐
A8.38	Portable hard drives	☐	☐
A8.39	Laptops	☐	☐
A8.40	Tablets	☐	☐
A8.41	Intangible forms by using electronic media, such as email, phone storage and cloud file sharing	☐	☐
A8.42	Physical exports	☐	☐

Will your project involve any of the following?		YES	NO
A8.43	Oral transfer by phone or videoconferencing or presentations	☐	☐
A8.44	Travelling overseas for any purpose, while unintentionally carrying any of the above.	☐	☐
A8.45	Will you be hosting foreign visitors?	☐	☐

If you answer YES to any of questions A8.1-A8.45 then you should complete a full export control assessment and append that to this application. Before doing this please contact INSPIRE who will advise further.		YES	NO
A8.46	Full export control assessment required?	☐	☐
A8.47	Full export control assessment completed?	☐	☐

[Return to the main form](#)

Appendix 2: Project Information Sheet for Participants



Participation Information Sheet

Independent early-stage female singer-songwriters experience disproportionately high levels of stress, anxiety, and emotional demands throughout their careers, yet there is limited research exploring well-being interventions designed specifically for this population. This research study, entitled “Integrating “A Voice Becoming...” (Ericksen, 2026) into the lived experience of working artists: A feasibility study of well-being interventions for independent early-stage female singer-songwriters,” is a two-week well-being program incorporating breathwork, gratitude journaling, self-compassion exercises, reflective prompts, and sung affirmations. By participating in this project, you will help deepen our understanding of how creative, embodied well-being practices may support emotional regulation, resilience, and psychological well-being among singer-songwriters. Your experiences and feedback will help evaluate the program's feasibility and effectiveness from the participant's perspective, providing valuable insights to refine the program and inform future research and teaching practices aimed at supporting singers' well-being. We'd like to invite you to take part in this study, and your participation is entirely voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason, up until your data has been anonymized and combined with other responses; after that point it may no longer be possible to remove your individual contribution.

What will this research project require?

In this study, you will be asked to participate in the following:

Completing the “A Voice Becoming...” two-week well-being program incorporating **breathwork, gratitude journaling, self-compassion exercises, reflective prompts, and sung affirmations**. While participants can engage with the program for as long as they like each day, **it is designed to take no more than 30 minutes per day over the two-week period.**

Questionnaires both before and after following the “A Voice Becoming...” program.

Interviews with the researcher, which will be conducted after you have completed the two-week program and the two questionnaires. Zoom AI transcription may be used as a backup to assist in generating interview transcripts.

An example of a written and sung affirmation may be requested after the program has been completed.

How will this information and the collected data be used and stored?

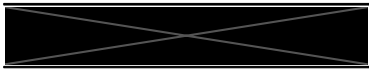
All recordings, questionnaire responses, written observations, field notes, and interview transcripts will be securely stored on a password-protected external hard drive and will only be accessible to the researcher. The information collected will be used solely for the purposes of this research study and will not be shared with any individuals or organizations outside of the project. Participants' identities will remain strictly confidential, all identifying information will be removed from research outputs, and all data will be anonymized in any reports, presentations, or publications arising from the research. In accordance with University of Wales Trinity Saint David research ethics procedures and applicable data protection and privacy requirements, all research data will be securely retained for the required period before being permanently destroyed within 3 months of project completion.

Thank you so much for your kind consideration for participation in this study.

Appendix 3: Participant Consent Forms/P1 Consent Form



Participant Consent Form



I affirm that I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason, up until the data has been anonymized and combined with other responses; after that point, it may no longer be possible to remove my individual contribution.

I understand that I may choose not to answer any question or participate in any activity associated with the research without any negative consequences.

I have read the participant information sheet, understand the purpose of the study, and have had the opportunity to ask questions, all of which have been answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that participation in this study may involve:

- Completing the “A Voice Becoming...” two-week well-being program
- Completing pre- and post-intervention questionnaires
- Participating in a semi-structured interview, which will be recorded
- Completing reflective journal entries throughout the program

I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

I agree to my interview being recorded, and I understand that a transcript of my interview will be created, with all identifying information removed. I understand that Zoom AI transcription may assist the researcher in generating interview transcripts and that all transcript data will be deleted within 3 months of completion of the project.

I understand that all information collected during this study will be treated as confidential and stored securely. My identity will remain anonymous in all reports, presentations, and publications, and any quotations used will be anonymized to prevent identification.

I understand that if information is disclosed indicating that I or another person may be at risk of serious harm, the researcher may have a duty to report this to the appropriate authorities. Wherever possible, this will be discussed with me beforehand, although reporting may be required without my consent in certain circumstances.

I understand that I could feel triggered by certain reflective journaling prompts. Should this be the case and professional help be needed, MusiCares is available at 1-800-687-4227 or help@musicares.org.

I understand that I am free to contact the researcher if I require further information, clarification, or have any questions regarding the research project or my participation.

I understand that signed consent forms and research data will be securely stored in accordance with university ethics and data protection requirements and that interview transcripts will be deleted within 3 months of completion of the final project.

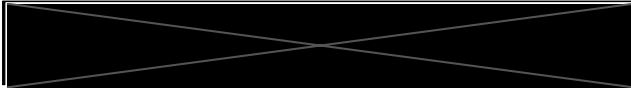
Sharon Ericksen, Researcher
SEVSresearchstudy@gmail.com

Joshua Lee-Cummins, Research Supervisor
Joshua@voicestudycentre.com

By signing below, I acknowledge and agree to the above terms of this research study.



Participant Signature



I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study.



Researcher Signature

P2 Consent Form



Participant Consent Form

I, , confirm that I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason, up until the data has been anonymized and combined with other responses; after that point, it may no longer be possible to remove my individual contribution.

I understand that I may choose not to answer any question or participate in any activity associated with the research without any negative consequences.

I have read the participant information sheet, understand the purpose of the study, and have had the opportunity to ask questions, all of which have been answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that participation in this study may involve:

- Completing the “A Voice Becoming...” two-week well-being program
- Completing pre- and post-intervention questionnaires
- Participating in a semi-structured interview, which will be recorded
- Completing reflective journal entries throughout the program

I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

I agree to my interview being recorded, and I understand that a transcript of my interview will be created, with all identifying information removed. I understand that Zoom AI transcription may assist the researcher in generating interview transcripts and that all transcript data will be deleted within 3 months of completion of the project.

I understand that all information collected during this study will be treated as confidential and stored securely. My identity will remain anonymous in all reports, presentations, and publications, and any quotations used will be anonymized to prevent identification.

I understand that if information is disclosed indicating that I or another person may be at risk of serious harm, the researcher may have a duty to report this to the appropriate authorities. Wherever possible, this will be discussed with me beforehand, although reporting may be required without my consent in certain circumstances.

I understand that I could feel triggered by certain reflective journaling prompts. Should this be the case and professional help be needed, MusiCares is available at 1-800-687-4227 or help@musicares.org.

I understand that I am free to contact the researcher if I require further information, clarification, or have any questions regarding the research project or my participation.

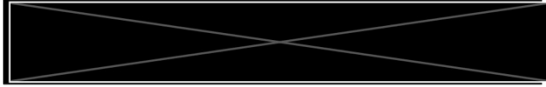
I understand that signed consent forms and research data will be securely stored in accordance with university ethics and data protection requirements and that interview transcripts will be deleted within 3 months of completion of the final project.

Sharon Ericksen, Researcher
SEVSresearchstudy@gmail.com

Joshua Lee-Cummins, Research Supervisor
joshua@voicestudycentre.com

By signing below, I acknowledge and agree to the above terms of this research study.


Participant Signature



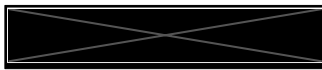
I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study.


Researcher Signature

P3 Consent Form



Participant Consent Form



, confirm that I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason, up until the data has been anonymized and combined with other responses; after that point, it may no longer be possible to remove my individual contribution.

I understand that I may choose not to answer any question or participate in any activity associated with the research without any negative consequences.

I have read the participant information sheet, understand the purpose of the study, and have had the opportunity to ask questions, all of which have been answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that participation in this study may involve:

- Completing the “A Voice Becoming...” two-week well-being program
- Completing pre- and post-intervention questionnaires
- Participating in a semi-structured interview, which will be recorded
- Completing reflective journal entries throughout the program

I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

I agree to my interview being recorded, and I understand that a transcript of my interview will be created, with all identifying information removed. I understand that Zoom AI transcription may assist the researcher in generating interview transcripts and that all transcript data will be deleted within 3 months of completion of the project.

I understand that all information collected during this study will be treated as confidential and stored securely. My identity will remain anonymous in all reports, presentations, and publications, and any quotations used will be anonymized to prevent identification.

I understand that if information is disclosed indicating that I or another person may be at risk of serious harm, the researcher may have a duty to report this to the appropriate authorities. Wherever possible, this will be discussed with me beforehand, although reporting may be required without my consent in certain circumstances.

I understand that I could feel triggered by certain reflective journaling prompts. Should this be the case and professional help be needed, MusiCares is available at 1-800-687-4227 or help@musicares.org.

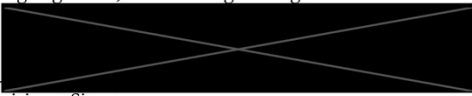
I understand that I am free to contact the researcher if I require further information, clarification, or have any questions regarding the research project or my participation.

I understand that signed consent forms and research data will be securely stored in accordance with university ethics and data protection requirements and that interview transcripts will be deleted within 3 months of completion of the final project.

Sharon Ericksen, Researcher
SEVSresearchstudy@gmail.com

Joshua Lee-Cummins, Research Supervisor
joshua@voicestudycentre.com

By signing below, I acknowledge and agree to the above terms of this research study.



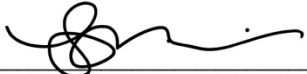
Participant Signature



Participant Name

Date

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study.



Researcher Signature

P4 Consent Form



Participant Consent Form

I, _____, confirm that I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason, up until the data has been anonymized and combined with other responses; after that point, it may no longer be possible to remove my individual contribution.

I understand that I may choose not to answer any question or participate in any activity associated with the research without any negative consequences.

I have read the participant information sheet, understand the purpose of the study, and have had the opportunity to ask questions, all of which have been answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that participation in this study may involve:

- Completing the “A Voice Becoming...” two-week well-being program
- Completing pre- and post-intervention questionnaires
- Participating in a semi-structured interview, which will be recorded
- Completing reflective journal entries throughout the program

I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

I agree to my interview being recorded, and I understand that a transcript of my interview will be created, with all identifying information removed. I understand that Zoom AI transcription may assist the researcher in generating interview transcripts and that all transcript data will be deleted within 3 months of completion of the project.

I understand that all information collected during this study will be treated as confidential and stored securely. My identity will remain anonymous in all reports, presentations, and publications, and any quotations used will be anonymized to prevent identification.

I understand that if information is disclosed indicating that I or another person may be at risk of serious harm, the researcher may have a duty to report this to the appropriate authorities. Wherever possible, this will be discussed with me beforehand, although reporting may be required without my consent in certain circumstances.

I understand that I could feel triggered by certain reflective journaling prompts. Should this be the case and professional help be needed, MusiCares is available at 1-800-687-4227 or help@musicares.org.

I understand that I am free to contact the researcher if I require further information, clarification, or have any questions regarding the research project or my participation.

I understand that signed consent forms and research data will be securely stored in accordance with university ethics and data protection requirements and that interview transcripts will be deleted within 3 months of completion of the final project.

SHARON ERICKSEN

V O C A L S T U D I O

Sharon Ericksen, Researcher
SEVSresearchstudy@gmail.com

Joshua Lee-Cummins, Research Supervisor
Joshua@voicestudycentre.com

By signing below, I acknowledge and agree to the above terms of this research study.


Participant Signature

 09-09-2026

Participant Name

Date

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study.


Signature _____ Researcher

P5 Consent Form



Participant Consent Form



confirm that I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason, up until the data has been anonymized and combined with other responses; after that point, it may no longer be possible to remove my individual contribution.

I understand that I may choose not to answer any question or participate in any activity associated with the research without any negative consequences.

I have read the participant information sheet, understand the purpose of the study, and have had the opportunity to ask questions, all of which have been answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that participation in this study may involve:

- Completing the “A Voice Becoming...” two-week well-being program
- Completing pre- and post-intervention questionnaires
- Participating in a semi-structured interview, which will be recorded
- Completing reflective journal entries throughout the program

I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

I agree to my interview being recorded, and I understand that a transcript of my interview will be created, with all identifying information removed. I understand that Zoom AI transcription may assist the researcher in generating interview transcripts and that all transcript data will be deleted within 3 months of completion of the project.

I understand that all information collected during this study will be treated as confidential and stored securely. My identity will remain anonymous in all reports, presentations, and publications, and any quotations used will be anonymized to prevent identification.

I understand that if information is disclosed indicating that I or another person may be at risk of serious harm, the researcher may have a duty to report this to the appropriate authorities. Wherever possible, this will be discussed with me beforehand, although reporting may be required without my consent in certain circumstances.

I understand that I could feel triggered by certain reflective journaling prompts. Should this be the case and professional help be needed, MusiCares is available at 1-800-687-4227 or help@musicares.org.

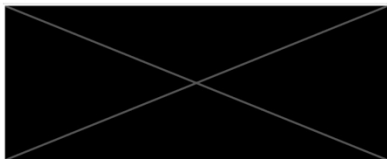
I understand that I am free to contact the researcher if I require further information, clarification, or have any questions regarding the research project or my participation.

I understand that signed consent forms and research data will be securely stored in accordance with university ethics and data protection requirements and that interview transcripts will be deleted within 3 months of completion of the final project.

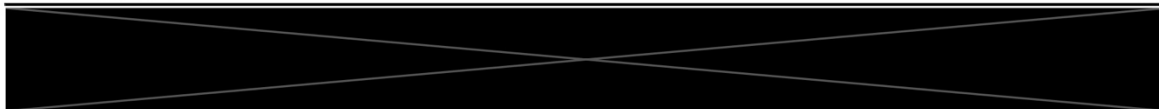
Sharon Ericksen, Researcher

Joshua Lee-Cummins, Research Supervisor SEVSresearchstudy@gmail.com
Joshua@voicestudycentre.com

By signing below, I acknowledge and agree to the above terms of this research study.



Participant Signature



I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a trailing flourish, positioned above a horizontal line.

Researcher Signature

Appendix 4: Permission Letter



Sharon L. Ericksen
1713 14th Avenue South
Unit B
Nashville, TN 37212
USA

To whom it may concern:

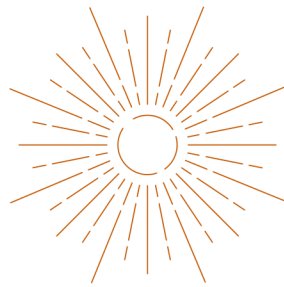
My name is Sharon Ericksen, and I am self-employed and teaching out of my own private studio at the aforementioned address in Nashville, TN. I am undertaking a research project entitled **“Integrating “A Voice Becoming...” into the lived experiences of working artists: A feasibility study of well-being interventions for independent, early-stage female singer-songwriters”** in accordance with my studies through the University of Wales Trinity Saint David. This study will take place on the same premises as my professional studio and, as a self-employed business owner, I grant myself permission and approve of any and all work related to this research study. Research will follow the strict guidelines laid out in the Ethics Form approved by the UWTSD on July 24, 2026 with self-selected participants who are all over the age of 18, and do not represent any vulnerable groups. They have all provided informed consent.

Sincerely,

Sharon L. Ericksen
SEVSresearchstudy@gmail.com

Appendix 5: “A Voice Becoming...” 2-week program

“THE AUTHENTIC SELF IS THE SOUL MADE VISIBLE.”
--SARAH BAN BREATHNACH



A VOICE BECOMING...

*Creating Artistic Authenticity
through Resilience, Self-Awareness,
Self-Compassion and Gratitude*

Hello!

A Voice Becoming... is a two-week program designed to support emotional regulation, self-awareness, creativity, and well-being in emerging singer-songwriters through small daily practices grounded in contemporary well-being research and creative practice. The program combines breathwork, gratitude journaling, self-compassion exercises, intention setting, and sung affirmations in ways designed to feel accessible, creative, and artist-centered.

The goal is not perfection or toxic positivity. The goal is to create small moments of kindness, clarity, and calm—leading to self-reflection, emotional awareness, self-kindness, and nervous system regulation as you navigate the daily pressures of creative work.

Each day's activities are designed to take roughly 30 minutes, with additional prompts you can use if you want to go deeper. Do what you can, but try to show up for yourself every day because consistency is the real key, and you are worth it. You've got this!

This project was born out of the intersection of my final project for my Master's degree in Vocal Pedagogy and a labor of love for my female voice students who are currently pursuing careers in the professional music industry. I appreciate your generosity in taking the time to help me with your thoughts and insights on this program.

To "becoming" the greatest version of YOU and your unique voice,
All my love,
Sharon

Week One: Awareness & Regulation

Day 1: *“Creativity takes courage.” ~ Henri Matisse*

You’ve arrived! Welcome to a loving and safe space, you beautiful, creative genius. Just showing up here with your attention and curiosity is a wonderful act of self-kindness. Yay, you! Your creativity, your voice, and your practice MATTER, and a calm, clear mind is the best way to allow your inspiration to come through.

Breathwork: Today, we will start with a type of Breathwork called **Box Breathing**.

- First, find a quiet place where you won’t be interrupted. Make yourself comfortable, either seated or lying down, and relax your body. If you are lying down, you can place a pillow under your head and a bolster under your knees.
- Put one hand on your chest and the other hand on your stomach. Bring your attention inward and close your eyes. In your mind’s eye, imagine the four sides of a square. Imagine that you are tracing an outline of the square.
- Start at the top left corner and, in your mind’s eye, “draw the line” from the top left corner to the top right corner, as you inhale slowly through your nose to the count of four.
- Next, hold your breath (don’t inhale or exhale) for a count of four as you imagine drawing the line from the top right corner down to the bottom right corner of the square.
- Now, exhale through your mouth fully emptying your lungs as you draw your line from right to left across the bottom of the square.
- Finally, hold your breath for a count of four as you imagine drawing the line from the bottom left corner up to the top left corner.

(This is considered one “box” or cycle.)

Repeat, trying to keep each count of four rhythmically even. Aim for five minutes of box breathing. Even a few cycles make a difference, any time of day when you need them!

**Tip:* On your inhalation, feel the air fill your belly – your abdomen should rise, and the hand on your chest should remain still. This is just like your singer’s breath.

Day 1 (continued)

Gratitude Exercise:

Let's start simple today. Having gratitude for the people and the world around us can shift our attitudes to a more positive outlook in the long term.

Write: "Three good things." What are three things that you are grateful for? Don't just list them, describe them in detail. Be specific, focusing on the authentic feeling of WHY you are grateful. You can include both significant and minor moments. Reflect on what's often taken for granted and remember that small things count. Write whatever comes to mind, unedited and unstructured, prioritizing introspection over perfection. Include both significant and minor moments. The key here is to be non-judgmental and avoid self-criticism. Surrender control – you will find that insights will emerge organically when you embrace the process, not the product. Vary the things you write about to broaden your perspective.

With the feelings of gratitude that you just cultivated within yourself, close your eyes and perform four more "boxes" of your box breathing, but this time hold the feelings of gratitude that just came up in your writing as you do this exercise.

Self-Compassion Exercise:

Write: What are three things that you like about yourself and why? You could choose things like your kindness, compassion, and humor. Again, the key here is to avoid self-criticism. *For example:* You might write, "I am kind, I am honest, I am strong." Think about the parts of yourself that make you happy or proud.

Sung Affirmation Exercise:

Once you have completed that, I want you to take those affirmation statements and use them to write a melody, working them into a short verse or chorus. Sing your song to yourself three times before you go to bed for the evening. The key to the magic of affirmations is that you truly feel and believe the words as you sing them. This works well if you can sing it into the mirror. If that is not possible, just focus on your words, and truly embody them as you sing.

Day 2: *"Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless." ~ Mother Teresa*

Breathwork: Diaphragmatic breathing:

First, find a quiet place where you won't be interrupted. Make yourself comfortable, either seated or lying down, and relax your body. If you are lying down, you can place a pillow under your head and a bolster under your knees.

Put one hand over your heart and the other on your abdomen. Relax your shoulders and your jaw. As you do this exercise, I want you to think about a person in your life for whom you are grateful. Let the feelings of gratitude lift your spirits, and try to hold on to that feeling throughout the exercise. Close your eyes.

Inhale through your nose for a count of 4. Feel the air expand your belly. Remember, your chest should not rise.

Exhale through your mouth for a count of 6-8 with a gentle sigh.

Repeat for five minutes.

Notice: Where do you hold tension when anxious?
 What changes in your breathing when you are stressed or anxious?

Gratitude Exercise:

Write: Write about a moment music made you feel connected.

Write about one person who has supported your creativity. If you had to write this person a letter to thank them for their support, what would you say? Let the feelings of gratitude be your guide. Write the letter.

Day 2 (continued)

Self-Compassion Exercise:

Write: If a close friend came to you because they were struggling and feeling very bad about themselves, how would you respond to them to comfort them?

Think about the times when you are struggling and feeling bad about yourself. How do you typically respond to yourself? Write down what you would say to yourself or what you might do.

Is there a difference between what you would say to a friend and what you say to yourself? What fears might be leading you to treat yourself and others so differently?

What do you think might happen if you responded to yourself in the same way that you respond to a close friend when you're struggling?

Sung Affirmation Exercise:

Write: Think about the kind words you would use to comfort your friend. Can you write an affirmation for how you might comfort yourself and set it to music? For example: "Everything is going to be okay and I'm always on your side?"

Show yourself this kindness by singing it to yourself.

"I've been searching for ways to heal myself and I've found that kindness is the best way."

~ Lady Gaga

Day 3: *"Have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become."*

~ Steve Jobs

Breathwork: Double Inhale/Physiological Sigh:

Inhale slowly through your nose and then, without exhaling at all, inhale again.

Pause for 2 counts.

Exhale through your mouth with an audible sigh, making sure you empty your lungs completely.

Repeat 8-10 times.

Gratitude Exercise:

Write: What parts of music still bring me joy? When do I feel most creatively alive?

Sit in gratitude for the awe of music and creativity. Reflect on how you feel about music's prominence in your life.

"Do not judge me by my success. Judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again."

~ Nelson Mandela

Day 3 (continued)

Self-Compassion Exercise:

Write: Think of a difficult situation you had recently. Bring the situation to mind. Can you actually feel the stress and discomfort in your body? What emotion did you need to allow most in that moment?

Put your hand on your heart and say to yourself, "This is stress. This feels like _____.
Name it.

Reflect on the fact that suffering is a part of life and all humans suffer. Connect it. Say to yourself: "I'm not alone."

"This is part of being human."

Now, let's counter that feeling by choosing to offer yourself some kindness and understanding for the moment you experienced. You could say:

"May I give myself the compassion that I need."

"May I forgive myself."

"May I be strong."

"May I give myself grace."

Self-compassion is a daily practice that can change the quality of your inner life.

Sung Affirmation Exercise:

Once you have completed that, I want you to take those affirmation statements and use them to write a melody, working them into a short verse or chorus. Sing your song to yourself three times before you go to bed for the evening. The key to the magic of affirmations is that you truly feel and believe the words as you sing them. This works well if you can sing it into the mirror. If that is not possible, just focus on your words, and truly embody them as you sing.

Day 4 *"Resilience isn't a single skill. It's a variety of skills and coping mechanisms. To bounce back from bumps in the road as well as failures, you should focus on emphasizing the positive." ~ Jean Chatzky*

Breathwork: Today we will try **alternate nostril breathing**, which is known to increase alertness while decreasing blood pressure. For this reason, this may be a good technique to use in the morning or when you need a quiet break before getting back to work:

Exhale through your mouth making a "whooshing" sound.

Bring your right hand up to your nose, with your index finger hovering over your left nostril and your thumb hovering over the right nostril.

Use your thumb to block the right nostril and inhale deeply through the left nostril.

Use your index finger and thumb to block both nostrils and hold your breath for two counts.

Then, release your thumb to unblock your right nostril and exhale completely.

Take a pause at the bottom of your exhale. Then, keeping the left nostril closed, take a deep inhale through your right nostril.

Use your thumb to block off your right nostril. With both nostrils closed, hold your breath for two counts.

Release your index finger to unblock your left nostril and exhale. Take a pause at the bottom of your exhale before beginning the series again.

Repeat for 8-10 minutes.

Gratitude Exercise:

Write: Daily Gratitude List: Write three things that you are grateful for.

Day 4 (continued)

Self-Compassion Exercise:

Write: Write down one recurring negative thought. Then ask:

-Is this absolutely true?

-What would a kinder interpretation sound like?

Now write down one strength you often overlook in yourself. Notice when you are being critical of yourself and take note of the words you use in your mind, as well as the tone you use with yourself. The key is to catch yourself when you are thinking these negative thoughts and replace them with more self-compassionate ones in the moment.

Sung Affirmation Exercise:

Write a short melody to the “strength” you often overlook in yourself, and write another one for the “kinder interpretation” of the negative thought. Sing these affirmations to yourself 2-3 times while focusing on the words.

“Indeed, this life is a test. It is a test of many things – of our convictions and priorities, our faith and our faithfulness, our patience and our resilience, and in the end, our ultimate desires.”

~ Sheri L. Dew

Day 5 *"Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood.
Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less."
~ Marie Curie*

Breathwork: Double Inhale/Physiological Sigh:

Inhale slowly through your nose and then, without exhaling at all, inhale again.

Pause for 2 counts.

Exhale through your mouth with an audible sigh, making sure you empty your lungs completely.

Repeat 8-10 times.

Gratitude Exercise:

Write: In your personal life, what is the one thing you consider the biggest accomplishment?

What are you afraid of right now? How can you make the most of your fear?

Describe who or what makes you feel safe where you are.

*"Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one's courage."
~ Anais Nin*

Day 5 (continued)

Self-Compassion Exercise:

Write: Review the events of today. Write down anything that you felt bad about, anything you judged yourself for, or anything that caused you pain. For each event, use **Mindfulness, Common Humanity, and Self-Kindness** to process the event.

For example: Using Mindfulness, how could I have reacted differently or more gracefully? Using Common Humanity, how can you put the event into greater perspective? Using Self-Kindness, how can you show yourself kindness for your reactions or feelings?

Sung Affirmation Exercise:

Write a melody about the kindness you would like to show yourself. Sing it to yourself 2-3 times with intention.

“You may never know what results come of your actions, but if you do nothing, there will be no results.”

~ Mahatma Gandhi

Day 6 *“You have a treasure within you that is infinitely greater than anything the world can offer.” ~ Eckhart Tolle*

Breathwork: **4-7-8 Breathing** reduces anxiety but also has been shown to help users get a good night's sleep by calming the mind from rumination and repetitive thoughts. This can be done while sitting or lying down. It is particularly effective before bedtime.

Inhale slowly through the nose for 4 counts.

Hold the breath for 7 counts.

Exhale through the mouth for 8 counts.

Repeat for 8-10 minutes.

Gratitude Exercise:

Write: Which author, artist, or musician has had the greatest impact on your life? Describe him or her. How did their art transform you?

If you could tell that artist how you feel, what would you say?

Self-Compassionate Body Scan:

Lie down in a comfortable position. Close your eyes. In your mind's eye, slowly scan your body from head to toe, bringing awareness to each part. As you focus on each area, offer it compassion and gratitude, recognizing that your body is an essential part of your life experience

Sung Affirmation Exercise:

Write a melody to the phrase, “I trust myself to keep going and I trust myself to keep growing.” Write another three lines about WHY this is so. Sing it to yourself!

Day 7 *"Mindfulness can help people of any age. That's because we become what we think." ~ Goldie Hawn*

Breathwork: Five Finger Breathing (5 minutes):

You will need two hands for this type of breathwork exercise. One hand will be stationary and serve as your base, and the other will be used to trace your fingers. You may find that your dominant hand is easier to use for tracing.

Hold your nondominant hand in front of you with fingers spread apart.

Start tracing your thumb with your opposite hand index finger. Begin where your thumb meets your wrist and inhale slowly as you begin tracing your thumb.

When you reach the top of your thumb, exhale as you drag your index finger down the other side of your thumb.

Inhale as you trace the right side of your index finger the same way, and exhale on the other side of the index finger, moving slowly and deliberately. Continue on to the middle, ring and pinky fingers, inhaling and exhaling. When you reach the exhale of the pinky finger, start again by inhaling and tracing all of the fingers again in the opposite order until you reach the thumb.

Gratitude Exercise:

Write: It's the end of Week 1! You made it!! What were the best things that happened this week? Write about the moments, experiences or interactions that brought you joy, growth or gratitude. Give thanks for the good things that happened this week.

Self-Compassion Exercise:

Describe who or what makes you feel like yourself and why.

Sung Affirmation Exercise:

Write a melody to the phrase, "May I be happy, may I be healthy, may I be safe." You know what to do. Sing it to yourself.

Week Two: Integration & Creative Empowerment

Day 8 *“Be mindful of your self-talk. It’s a conversation with the universe.” ~ David James Lees*

Breathwork: Diaphragmatic Breathing (5 minutes):

First, find a quiet place where you won’t be interrupted. Make yourself comfortable, either seated or lying down, and relax your body. If you are lying down, you can place a pillow under your head and a bolster under your knees.

Put one hand over your heart and the other on your abdomen. Relax your shoulders and your jaw. As you do this exercise, I want you to think about a person in your life for whom you are grateful. Let the feelings of gratitude lift your spirits, and try to hold on to that feeling throughout the exercise. Close your eyes.

Inhale through your nose for a count of 4. Feel the air expand your belly. Remember, your chest should not rise.

Exhale through your mouth for a count of 6–8 with a gentle sigh.

Gratitude Exercise:

Write: Have you recently had a “perfect day?” Describe it.

Describe the dreams you have for yourself. What would a day in your dream life look like? Describe every detail from what you are wearing, where you live, what you are doing, and what it smells like. Be specific. Give thanks for the future.

“Mindfulness is about being fully awake in our lives. It is about perceiving the exquisite vividness of each moment. We also gain immediate access to our own powerful inner resources for insight, transformation, and healing.”

~ Jon Kabat-Zinn

Day 8 (continued)

Self-Compassion Exercise:

Write a love note to yourself. Tell yourself at least five things you absolutely love about yourself. Put it on your bathroom mirror.

Sung Affirmation Exercise:

Set that love note to music and sing it to yourself.

Write: How does writing and singing musical affirmations make you feel? Why?

"Your body hears everything your mind says."

~ Naomi Judd

Day 9 *“To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you.” ~ Lewis Smedes*

Breathwork: Box Breathing:

First, find a quiet place where you won't be interrupted. Make yourself comfortable, either seated or lying down, and relax your body. If you are lying down, you can place a pillow under your head and a bolster under your knees.

Put one hand on your chest and the other hand on your stomach. Bring your attention inward and close your eyes. In your mind's eye, imagine the four sides of a square. Imagine that you are tracing an outline of the square.

Start at the top left corner and in your mind's eye “draw the line” from the top left corner to the right top corner, as you inhale slowly through your nose to the count of four.

Next, hold your breath (don't inhale or exhale) for a count of four as you imagine drawing the line from the top right corner down to the bottom right corner of the square.

Now, exhale through your mouth fully emptying your lungs as you draw your line from right to left across the bottom of the square.

Finally, hold your breath for a count of four as you imagine drawing the line from the bottom left corner up to the top left corner.

(This is considered one “box” or cycle.)

Repeat, trying to keep each count of four rhythmically even. Aim for five minutes of box breathing.

Gratitude Exercise:

Write: In the last 24 hours, who has made you smile genuinely? What did he or she do?

Day 9 (continued)

Self-Compassion Exercise:

How do you go about loving the people who are most important to you? Four distinct methods for loving others include:

Appreciating others: Setting time aside to bond with people who matter to you.

Interacting with others: Valuing people for their actions and showing your gratitude.

Showing integrity: Accepting others as they are, without judgment or criticism.

Forgiving people
for past hurts: Ignoring others' small mistakes and letting things go more often.

Forgiving people involves practicing self-forgiveness before all. Self-forgiveness is essential before we can forgive other people and recover from pain. It also involves showing your feelings. If you are feeling hurt, find a sensitive way to express your pain.

Write: Is there someone you want to forgive in your life? What could you do for yourself to get you closer to forgiving that person?

Sung Affirmation Exercise:

Make up a melody for the words "I forgive you and my forgiveness sets me free." Sing it to yourself.

"If we want greater clarity in our purpose or deeper and more meaningful spiritual lives, vulnerability is the path."

~ Brené Brown

Day 10 *"The most precious gift we can offer others is our presence. When mindfulness embraces those we love, they will bloom like flowers." ~ Thich Nhat Hanh*

Breathwork: Double Inhale/Physiological Sigh:

Inhale slowly through your nose and then, without exhaling at all, inhale again.

Pause for 2 counts.

Exhale through your mouth with an audible sigh, making sure you empty your lungs completely.

Repeat 8-10 times.

Gratitude Exercise:

Write: Daily gratitude list: "Three good things."

Reflect on three different 'good things', how they make you feel, and why you are grateful for them.

Self-Compassion Exercise:

Describe one mistake you've made, and how it turned into a positive experience.

Sung Affirmation Exercise:

Make up a melody for the words "I'm going to show up and be seen." Sing it, sister! Be intentional!

Day II *"I think that research is very important, but in the end you have to work from your instinct and feeling and take those risks and be fearless." ~ Anna Wintour*

Breathwork: Alternate nostril breathing:

Exhale through your mouth making a "whooshing" sound.

Bring your right hand up to your nose, with your index finger hovering over your left nostril and your thumb hovering over the right nostril.

Use your thumb to block the right nostril and inhale deeply through the left nostril.

Use your index finger and thumb to block both nostrils and hold your breath for two counts.

Then, release your thumb to unblock your right nostril and exhale completely.

Take a pause at the bottom of your exhale. Then, keeping the left nostril closed, take a deep inhale through your right nostril.

Use your thumb to block off your right nostril. With both nostrils closed, hold your breath for two counts.

Release your index finger to unblock your left nostril and exhale. Take a pause at the bottom of your exhale before beginning the series again.

Repeat for 8-10 minutes.

Gratitude Exercise:

Write: What makes creating music so meaningful to you?

What is one thing your voice allows you to express?

What are three things that brought you comfort recently?

Day 11 (continued)

Self-Compassionate Body Scan:

Lie down in a comfortable position. Close your eyes. In your mind's eye, slowly scan your body from head to toe, bringing awareness to each part. As you focus on each area, offer it compassion and gratitude, recognizing that your body is an essential part of your life experience.

Sung Affirmation Exercise:

Choose one of these affirmations to set to music and sing it to yourself:

"I am proud of who I am becoming."

"I believe in myself and my abilities."

"I am beautiful inside and out."

"I love and accept myself unconditionally."

"My happiness comes from within."

"I create my own sunshine."

"Play is the highest form of research."

~ Albert Einstein

Day 12 *"Having peace, happiness, and healthiness is my definition of beauty. And you can't have any of that without sleep."*

~ Beyonce

Breathwork: **4-7-8 Breathing** reduces anxiety but also has been shown to help users get a good night's sleep by calming the mind from rumination and repetitive thoughts. This can be done while sitting or lying down. It is particularly effective before bedtime.

Inhale slowly through the nose for 4 counts.

Hold the breath for 7 counts.

Exhale through the mouth for 8 counts.

Repeat for 8-10 minutes.

Gratitude Exercise:

Write: Describe a challenging situation you experienced, what you are grateful for, and the lessons it taught you. Reflect on the strength you have shown, the silver linings you discovered or the support you have received. Acknowledging gratitude in difficult times can help develop resilience.

Day 12 (continued)

Self-Compassion Exercise:

Where am I hardest on myself?

Read what you wrote back to yourself. Where could you reframe a negative thought and replace it with a positive one?

What would gentleness look like today?

When do I feel most creatively alive?

Sung Affirmation Exercise:

Make up a melody to this positive affirmation: "Nothing can dim my light that shines from within." Sing it to yourself!

"The best bridge between despair and hope is a good night's sleep."

~ E. Joseph Cossman

Day 13 *"We are each gifted in a unique and important way. It is our privilege and our adventure to discover our own special light."*

~ Mary Dunbar

Breathwork: Five Finger Breathing (5 minutes):

You will need two hands for this type of breathwork exercise. One hand will be stationary and serve as your base, and the other will be used to trace your fingers. You may find that your dominant hand is easier to use for tracing.

Hold your nondominant hand in front of you with fingers spread apart.

Start tracing your thumb with your opposite hand index finger. Begin where your thumb meets your wrist and inhale slowly as you begin tracing your thumb.

When you reach the top of your thumb, exhale as you drag your index finger down the other side of your thumb.

Inhale as you trace the right side of your index finger the same way, and exhale on the other side of the index finger, moving slowly and deliberately. Continue on to the middle, ring and pinky fingers, inhaling and exhaling. When you reach the exhale of the pinky finger, start again by inhaling and tracing all of the fingers again in the opposite order until you reach the thumb.

Gratitude Exercise:

Write: Describe a teacher or mentor that you feel indebted to. How did they make you feel? What were the most important things they taught you?

"A beautiful body perishes, but a work of art dies not."

~ Leonardo da Vinci

Day 13 (continued)

Guided Self-Compassion Visualization:

Find a quiet space and close your eyes. Imagine your teacher, mentor, or a compassionate figure providing you with unconditional love, kindness, and acceptance. Visualize this figure comforting you in challenging times and offering encouraging words. Use this guided visualization to counteract self-critical thoughts and reconnect with your inner strength whenever you feel inadequate.

Sung Affirmation Exercise:

Take all your sung affirmations from last week and record them on your phone so you can listen to them when you need them.

“Only when you cultivate your talents and gifts do you prosper.”

~ Sunday Adelaja

Day 14 *"Your talent is God's gift to you. What you do with it is your gift back to God." ~ Leo Buscaglia*

Breathwork: Diaphragmatic Breathing (5 minutes):

First, find a quiet place where you won't be interrupted. Make yourself comfortable, either seated or lying down, and relax your body. If you are lying down, you can place a pillow under your head and a bolster under your knees.

Put one hand over your heart and the other on your abdomen. Relax your shoulders and your jaw. As you do this exercise, I want you to think about a person in your life for whom you are grateful. Let the feelings of gratitude lift your spirits, and try to hold on to that feeling throughout the exercise. Close your eyes.

Inhale through your nose for a count of 4. Feel the air expand your belly. Remember, your chest should not rise.

Exhale through your mouth for a count of 6-8 with a gentle sigh.

Gratitude Exercise:

Write: It's the end of Week 2! Congratulations! What were the best things that happened this week? Write about the moments, experiences, or interactions that brought you joy, growth, or gratitude. How did it compare with last week? Do you notice any differences in your general outlook on life? If so, what are they?

Day 14 (continued)

Self-Compassion Exercise:

Describe a time you helped someone in need. How did they feel? How did you feel?

Sung Affirmation Exercise:

If you had a mission statement, what would it be?

For your final sung affirmation, write a verse and a chorus about yourself with all of your positive attributes and hopes for the future. Think of this as your own personal mantra to get through difficult times.

Write it and take it forth into the world.

“Stir the world with your skills, shake the world with your talents, move the world with your brilliance, change the world with your genius.”

~ Matshona Dhliwayo

Thank You.

I am truly grateful for your time and insights in this feasibility study for “A Voice Becoming.” The entire project spanned three different research projects for the University of Wales Trinity Saint David in partnership with the Voice Study Centre.

I look forward to our post-intervention interview. Please reach out at 508-353-7382 or via email at SEVSresearchstudy@gmail.com to get scheduled asap.

“A Voice Becoming” is intended as a longer and more in-depth intervention; however, a 6-week trial would not have been feasible. I welcome your honest feedback and comments.

Wishing you great success in all that you do!

With gratitude,
Sharon

Appendix 6: Pre-Program Questionnaire



Pre-Program Questionnaire

Background Information:

How long have you been writing songs?

How long have you been performing?

How would you describe your career stage? (Emerging/Early-stage/Independent professional)

Approximately how many performances have you completed in the past 12 months?

Have you ever studied voice, and if so, for how long?

What do you typically do to relieve stress?

Have you previously engaged in any formal well-being practices (ex., mindfulness, journaling, breathwork, therapy, meditation)? If so, which ones, and for how long?

Rate the following from 1 (STRONGLY DISAGREE) to 10 (STRONGLY AGREE)

I feel stressed.

I feel able to manage stress related to my music career.

I feel confident in myself as an artist.

I am kind to myself when things do not go well.

I often experience self-criticism related to my music.

I enjoy making music.

I feel connected to my artistic identity.

I feel pressure to succeed as a musician/singer-songwriter.

I feel confident in earning a living through my music.

I enjoy promoting myself on social media.

I feel confident in my social media image.

I enjoy promoting myself on social media.

I am able to maintain healthy and consistent creative routines.

I feel connected to my singing voice.

I feel confident about my singing voice.

My voice feels like a safe way to express myself.

I notice tension in my body when singing.

I love myself.

I feel physically present when I perform publicly.

I feel confident when I perform publicly.

I feel in control of my career.

I feel anxious about my career.

I feel that well-being interventions are needed and relevant for female singer-songwriters.

I have resources for well-being interventions that are tailored to my individual needs as a music professional.

I intentionally make time for my own well-being.

I have effective strategies that help regulate my emotions.

I am self-aware.

I always speak kindly to myself.

I am resilient; I can handle anything.

Open Questions

1. Do you meditate? If so, how often? How long have you done this?
2. Do you journal your thoughts? If so, how often? How long have you done this?
3. Do you engage specifically in gratitude journaling? If so, how often? How long have you done this?
4. Do you use self-compassion exercises? If so, in what context and how often? How long have you done this?
5. Do you write or sing your own affirmations? If so, which one(s) and how often? How long have you done this?
6. Do you engage in any breathwork practices? If so, which one(s), and how often? How long have you done this?

7. What are the biggest challenges you currently face as an female singer-songwriter? List all that currently affect you and how/why.
8. What do you hope to gain from participating in “A Voice Becoming...”?
9. Is there anything you are feeling uncertain about before beginning the program?

Appendix 7: Post-Program Questionnaire



Post-Program Questionnaire

How many of the 14 days did you complete?

Approximately how much time did you typically spend on the program each day?

Rate the following from 1 (STRONGLY DISAGREE) to 10 (STRONGLY AGREE).

I was able to fit “A Voice Becoming...” into my daily life.

The amount of time required each day was manageable.

The two-week length of the program was manageable.

I enjoyed participating in “A Voice Becoming...”.

I would be willing to participate in a program like this again.

The program felt relevant to my experience as an independent female singer-songwriter.

The practices felt appropriate for supporting my well-being as an artist.

I remained engaged with the program throughout the two weeks.

The variety of practices helped maintain my interest.

Completing the program felt like an additional burden in my daily life.

The practices felt personally meaningful to me.

Incorporating my singing voice made the program more meaningful to me.

I intend to continue using one or more of the practices from “A Voice Becoming...”.

I would recommend “A Voice Becoming...” to another independent female singer-songwriter.

I feel able to manage stress related to my music.

I feel confident about myself as an artist.

I am kind to myself when things do not go well.

I often experience self-criticism related to my music.

I enjoy making music.

I feel connected to my artistic identity.

I feel pressure to succeed as a musician/singer-songwriter.

I am able to maintain healthy and consistent creative routines.

I feel connected to my singing voice.

I feel confident about my singing voice.

My voice feels like a safe way to express myself.

I notice tension in my body when singing.

I love myself.

I feel physically present when I perform publicly.

I feel anxious about my career.

I intentionally make time for my own well-being.

I have effective strategies that help regulate my emotions.

I always speak kindly to myself.

I am resilient, I can handle anything.

The breathwork exercises were easy to incorporate into my daily routine.

I found the breathwork exercises helpful for regulating stress or difficult emotions.

I would continue using breathwork exercises after completing the program.

The gratitude journaling exercises were easy to incorporate into my daily routine.

I found the gratitude exercises helpful for supporting my overall well-being.

I would continue using gratitude practices after completing the program.

The self-compassion exercises were easy to engage with.

The self-compassion exercises helped me respond to myself with greater kindness.

I would continue using the self-compassion practices after completing the program.

The reflective prompts helped me become more aware of my thoughts, feelings, or experiences.

The sung affirmations were easy to engage with.

I found the sung affirmations personally meaningful.

I would continue using sung affirmations after completing the program.

Using my singing voice enhanced my experience of the affirmation practice.

Singing an affirmation felt different from simply speaking or thinking of it.

I felt comfortable using my singing voice for this type of well-being practice.

The sung affirmations helped me feel more connected to my singing voice.

For each activity, rate:

Rate the following from 1 (NOT AT ALL HELPFUL) to 10 (EXTREMELY HELPFUL)

How helpful did you find breathwork for supporting your well-being during the program?

How helpful did you find gratitude journaling for supporting your well-being during the program?

How helpful were the self-compassion exercises in supporting your well-being during the program?

How helpful were the reflective prompts in supporting your well-being during the program?

How helpful were the sung affirmations in supporting your well-being during the program?

How personally meaningful did you find the breathwork exercises?

Would you use breathwork exercises again? **YES/NO**

Rate from 1 (NOT AT ALL MEANINGFUL) to 10 (EXTREMELY MEANINGFUL)

How personally meaningful did you find the gratitude journaling exercises?

Would you use gratitude journaling exercises again? **YES/NO**

How personally meaningful did you find the self-compassion exercises?

Would you use self-compassion exercises again? **YES/NO**

If you didn't find the reflective prompts helpful, what kinds of prompts would have been more useful or meaningful to you?

How personally meaningful did you find the sung affirmations?

Would you use sung affirmations again? **YES/NO**

Why or why not?

Which practices did you find MOST helpful?

Which practice did you find LEAST helpful?

Which practice are you MOST likely to continue using?

Was there a particular exercise or moment within the program that you found especially helpful or meaningful? Please explain briefly.

Was there a particular exercise that you found difficult, uncomfortable, unhelpful, or less relevant? Please explain briefly.

###

Appendix 8: Post-Program Interview Questions



Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me about your overall experience of participating in “A Voice Becoming...”?
What stands out most to you? Did your experience change over the two weeks?
2. How did completing “A Voice Becoming...” fit into your everyday life and the demands of being an independent singer-songwriter?

What made it easier to complete? What made it difficult? How did work, gigs, rehearsals, sessions, family life or other responsibilities affect participation?
3. How did you experience the amount of time and effort required by the program?
Did it ever feel like another task you had to complete? Were there days where it was easier or harder? Was there anything that felt unnecessarily demanding?
4. What influenced whether you completed – you didn’t complete – the practices on a particular day?
5. Were there particular practices that you found yourself wanting to do, avoiding, or putting off? Why?
6. Thinking about the different components – breathwork, gratitude journaling, self-compassion exercises, reflection and sung affirmations – which practices, if any, felt most useful or meaningful to you?
7. Were there any that felt less useful, uncomfortable, difficult or irrelevant to you?
Was there anything you would remove, change or add?
8. What was your experience of using your singing voice as part of a well-being practice rather than solely for performance or music-making?

Did you notice anything different in your relationship with your voice or your body during the two weeks? Did the sung affirmations feel different from simply thinking, speaking or writing an affirmation? If so, how?

9. Did you notice any changes in yourself during the two weeks that you associate with participating in “A Voice Becoming...”?

Anything related to managing stress or emotions, self-compassion or self-criticism, resilience, self-awareness, your relationship with your singing voice, your confidence or identity as an artist, or making time for your own well-being?

Were there areas where you noticed little or no change?

10. Did “A Voice Becoming...” feel specifically designed for someone like you, an independent female singer-songwriter? Why or why not?

Do you think this could have been a general well-being program for anyone, or was there something about it that made it particularly relevant to artists or singer-songwriters?

11. Now that the two weeks are over, are there any practices you expect to continue using? Why those?
12. If I offered “A Voice Becoming...” to another group of independent female singer-songwriters, what would you tell me to keep, change, add or remove?
13. Is there anything about your experience that I haven’t asked about that you think is important for me to know?
14. If you had to describe “A Voice Becoming...” to another independent artist, what would you say?
15. How did you use “A Voice Becoming...”? What time of day did you engage with it? Did you do it on a computer or in a notebook?

Appendix 9: Pre- and Post-Program Questionnaire Responses and Analysis

(Please see attached Excel file in ZIP DRIVE)

COMPARISON OF LIKERT SCALE													
PRE and POST DATA													
1 = STRONGLY DISAGREE ----- 10 = STRONGLY AGREE													
Rate the following from 1 (STRONGLY DISAGREE) to 10 (STRONGLY AGREE)													
	P1 PRE	P1 POST	P2 PRE	P2 POST	P3 PRE	P3 POST	P4 PRE	P4 POST	P5 PRE	P5 POST	Pre-Program Mean	Post Program Mean	Mean Change
9. I feel able to manage stress related to my music career.	7	7	5	3	4	7	7	7	7	8	6	6.4	0.4
10. I feel confident in myself as an artist.	7	7	6	4	9	9	5	6	3	8	6	6.8	0.8
11. I am kind to myself when things do not go well.	3	6	3	2	2	4	4	7	5	8	3.4	5.4	2
12. I often experience self-criticism related to my music.	5	4	9	8	10	9	9	7	6	6	7.8	6.8	-1
13. I enjoy making music.	9	10	8	8	10	10	9	10	10	10	9.2	9.6	0.4
14. I feel connected to my artistic identity.	8	8	5	5	10	10	8	8	6	8	7.4	7.8	0.4
15. I feel pressure to succeed as a musician/singer-songwriter.	10	10	9	8	10	10	9	10	10	7	9.6	9	-0.6
19. I am able to maintain healthy and consistent creative routines.	3	7	2	3	10	9	4	8	4	8	4.6	7	2.4
20. I feel connected to my singing voice.	9	8	7	7	10	8	5	8	8	8	7.8	7.8	0
21. I feel confident about my singing voice.	9	9	7	7	10	8	5	7	8	8	7.8	7.8	0
22. My voice feels like a safe way to express myself.	10	10	8	7	10	9	5	8	8	8	8.2	8.4	0.2
23. I notice tension in my body when singing.	9	7	7	7	5	4	8	8	3	3	6.4	5.8	-0.6
24. I love myself.	7	7	9	8	9	10	9	9	10	10	8.8	8.8	0
25. I feel physically present when I perform publicly.	10	10	8	7	2	4	10	6	8	10	7.6	7.4	-0.2
28. I feel anxious about my career.	10	8	8	7	9	9	10	10	7	7	8.8	8.2	-0.6
31. I intentionally make time for my own well-being.	6	8	5	2	10	10	6	8	8	8	7	7.2	0.2
32. I have effective strategies that help regulate my	7	10	7	7	8	9	9	10	7	8	7.6	8.8	1.2
34. I always speak kindly to myself.	3	5	3	4	1	1	7	9	4	7	3.6	5.2	1.6
35. I am resilient; I can handle anything.	8	9	8	5	8	8	5	8	8	8	7.4	7.6	0.2
Pink = QUESTIONS WHERE LOWER SCORES ARE EQUATED WITH FAVORABLE OUTCOMES													
Green = STRONGEST FINDINGS													

Appendix 10: Coded Transcription of Post-Program Interviews

INTERVIEW WITH PARTICIPANT 1

FEASIBILITY = TURQUOISE

ACCEPTABILITY = PURPLE

PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS = GREEN

BARRIERS & REFINEMENTS = RED

Transcript:

Me: First one, yay! Tell me about your overall experience in completing A Voice Becoming. Like, what stood out most to you, and did your experience with it change over the 2 weeks?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah, okay, what stood out most to me

Me: Yeah, and just tell me about your overall experience.

PARTICIPANT 1: Okay, overall experience, very positive. I feel like I have a hard time getting myself to do these kinds of things, so it was nice to have structure because I do well with structure. [THEME 1] So what stood out to me was the breathwork, because I will normally give up after about 1 minute of that. So to like have a program tell me to do it for 5 or 10 Then I did it, and then I was like, oh, this does actually work. [THEME 2]

Me: Yeah. Isn't that amazing? It's like 2 minutes and it didn't give me, you know,

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. Peace and tranquility. Yeah.

Me: Right, exactly.

PARTICIPANT 1: Um, and yeah, coupled— this program was coupled with me also getting back on So really, I feel incredible.

Me: Wow, wow.

PARTICIPANT 1: Totally. This was like helping in the meantime. Yeah. Um, What else? I would say like overall is like a short summary. That, and like gratitude is helpful in structure as well.

Me: Okay, I love that. How did completing A Voice Becoming fit into your everyday life and the demands of being an independent singer-songwriter?

PARTICIPANT 1: I mean, ideally I would do it at the same time every day and whatever, but the good thing about it was it was like 15 to 30 minutes, so you just do it when you can in the morning preferably, or at night. [THEME 1] I feel, I feel like when I did it in the morning, it, uh, like set the tone for a good day. But when I did it at night, it would like— I don't know, you probably program shit while you sleep, but also it calmed me down. Yeah.

Me: Yeah, yeah, I— yeah, that's what I was thinking. You program stuff like when you do that before you go to sleep. But I never like— I didn't— I wanted people to use this how they would use it and how they could fit it into their lives.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. Yeah.

Me: No. Okay, so, um, what made it easier to complete? What made it difficult? How did work gigs, rehearsals, songwriting, social media, family life, or other responsibilities affect participation?

Me: How did that affect your participation?

PARTICIPANT 1: Um. What made it easy to do? A free day. I was on vacation for half of it, so that made it easier. [THEME 1] What made it harder to do? A busy day. Um, or like waking up, like I often let myself be ruled by the mood I wake up in. So like if I wake up anxious, I'll be like, ah, it's not worth it. But then it would calm me down. [THEME 1] Um, so yeah, it fit in. I mean, it's like not too long, so it's, it's not like unmanageable.

Me: Okay, good. I love that. Um, all right, so how did you experience the amount of time and effort required by the program?

PARTICIPANT 1: How did I experience it? I thought it was good. I thought it wasn't too little, but it wasn't too much.

Me: Okay, so did it ever feel like another task that you had to complete?

PARTICIPANT 1: If I was like in a bad mood, yeah, but then I would just do it and I would be in less of a bad mood, so yeah.

Me: Yeah. Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah, you're, you're being a pessimist.

Me: So, um, were there days where it felt easier or harder?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. Um, yeah, it felt easier when I had less to do or I was like in a good mood. It felt harder if I was in a bad mood or had more to do.

Me: Was there anything that felt unnecessarily demanding?

PARTICIPANT 1: No.

Me: No. Okay. Um, what influenced whether you completed or didn't complete the practices on a particular day?

PARTICIPANT 1: I think the same things I already said. Yeah.

Me: Okay. Um, and then were there particular practices within it that you found yourself wanting to do, avoiding, or putting off, and why?

PARTICIPANT 1: Hmm. Um, I wanted to really do the breathwork and the gratitude. I would at first put off the sung affirmations because I felt silly, but then by the end I liked it. [THEME 2]

Me: I so get that. Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

Me: When we look at ourselves in the mirror, we're more likely to believe it, you know, sort of where those things came from there. They are supported by, they are supported by science. But, you know, but that doesn't necessarily make them easy to do.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. Yeah, I mean, if everything was easy to do, it probably wouldn't be the right program.

Me: Okay. So, okay, thinking about the different components, and you may have just already answered this, breathwork, gratitude, self-compassion, reflective prompts, and sung affirmations. Which ones felt most useful or meaningful to you?

PARTICIPANT 1: Um, probably breathwork and self-compassion.

Me: Okay. And were there any that felt less useful, uncomfortable, difficult, or irrelevant?

PARTICIPANT 1: Nothing felt irrelevant or not useful. Sung affirmations felt uncomfortable but then became comfortable.

Me: Yeah. Okay, and then, and why, just like, why was that?

PARTICIPANT 1: Because I felt silly, like I was like, what am I doing? But then I was like, okay, just embrace the whimsy.

Me: Yeah, exactly. Just embrace. Okay, and back to the program, was there anything that you would remove, add, or change?

PARTICIPANT 1: Okay, remove, add, or change? Um, I probably wouldn't remove anything, no. I would probably give examples of sung affirmations. [THEME 2]

Me: Okay. I like that.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. Where like if you're not in the mood that day to write one because you already have 2 sessions, you can just do the one from the thing. [THEME 2]

Me: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: But I do think there's weight in also writing them sometimes.

Me: I Well, and then, and just knowing what's on your mind as you write them.

PARTICIPANT 1: Right, but it could be cool if you had categories of like a few just ready to go.

Me: Yeah, I get that. And then you can just set them to a melody and that still works.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

Me: Okay, I like it. I like it a lot. Um, okay. What was your experience of using your singing voice as part of a well-being practice rather than solely for performance or music making?

PARTICIPANT 1: Um, I think again it brought back some whimsy. [THEME 3] Like when I was a kid, I would sing around the house all the time, but at some point that stopped, either because I have roommates or I got older. So I think it like brought that back, which is like a fun feeling.

Me: I love that feeling when I'm the only one in the house singing on the top of my lungs. I love that.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Me: Still love that. Did you notice anything different in your relationship with your voice or your body during the 2 weeks?

PARTICIPANT 1: Um. I think I was just having more fun with my voice. [THEME 3] Yeah. My body. Maybe I felt less anxiety in my body. Yeah.

Me: Did the sung affirmations feel different from simply thinking, speaking, or writing an affirmation?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yes.

Me: And if so, how?

PARTICIPANT 1: I think when you have to look at yourself in the mirror and do it, there's like an element of something there. [THEME 3]

Me: So can you further, like, explain that, or

PARTICIPANT 1: Um, maybe like when you are looking at yourself. You can gauge how much you believe yourself or not. [THEME 3]

Me: But yeah. And then, and then the question is, can you sing it enough that you do believe it?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah, and I think a lot of people are like, you have to go— you used to start practicing self-love on day 1, but I think you gotta practice some self-like before you jump to the love, you know what I mean? [THEME 3]

Me: I agree. Yeah. Okay. Um, did you notice any changes in yourself during the 2 weeks— oh, you just said this— that you associate with participating in A Voice Becoming?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah, I think like reduced physical anxiety. What was the other thing I said? I forget, but definitely reduced physical anxiety. More self-compassion.

Me: I love it. Okay, and did you notice anything related to managing stress or emotions? Self-compassion or self-criticism? Resilience, self-awareness. Relationship with your singing voice, your confidence or identity as an artist. Making time for your own well-being.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah, I think the breathwork is something I can carry with me now where if I'm feeling ungrounded or stressed, I can just do it and trust that if I like do it for more than 5 minutes it will work. [THEME 2]

Me: Um, all right, so that was perceived effectiveness, right? So what were the areas where you noticed little or no change?

PARTICIPANT 1: Um.

Me: So like managing stress, self-compassion, resilience, self-awareness, your relationship with your singing voice, your confidence or identity as an artist, making time for your own well-being.

PARTICIPANT 1: Um, probably confidence and identity because that's just a tougher one at the moment anyways.

Me: Yeah, I get that. I get that. Okay. Now, did A Voice Becoming feel specifically designed for someone like you, an independent female singer-songwriter? Why or why not?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah, uh, yes. Because it was written from one. Enough said.

Me: I know, I know. But like, but you know, it's, it's sort of like, how is it different from any other thing out there?

PARTICIPANT 1: Got it. Like from any other, like, stress program. Well, you're singing, step 1. Step 2, all of the reflection was targeted. Um, Yeah, I mean, that's huge.

Me: Yeah. And that was like the whole point of it. Okay, where were we? Um, do you think that this could have been— oh. That it's the same thing we just said. Do you think this could have been a general wellbeing program for anyone, or was there something about it that made it particularly relevant to artists and singer-songwriters?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah, I mean, you could like take out all the specificity of it and it would apply to anyone, but I think this was directly targeted for us. [THEME 2]

Me: And it was supposed to be, yay. Okay, now that the 2 weeks are over, are there any practices you expect to continue using?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. Yeah, probably all of them. Definitely breathwork, definitely gratitude, definitely And Reflection. It probably just made me naturally do that now a little bit more. And sung affirmations if I'm in a good mood. Yeah, maybe I'll attempt to start doing it if I'm in a bad mood too.

Me: I love it. Just tell yourself— I want you to write one called I Am a Queen.

PARTICIPANT 1: I am a queen.

Me: If I offered A Voice Becoming to another group of independent female singer-songwriters, what would you tell me to keep, change, add, or remove?

PARTICIPANT 1: Hmm, keep, change, add, or remove? Um, I mean, probably just the format. Like, it's hard being a PDF and you have to find it and scroll through it. Like an app or something, a book. I don't know.

Me: Yes. You're right. And that was another thing that I meant to ask you. How did you use it? Did you, did you do it on your computer? Did you do it in a notebook? How did you use it?

PARTICIPANT 1: I read it to myself and then I just went back to the PDF on my phone. And then I would read it on my phone, and then if there was written stuff, I would do it in a notebook. Yeah.

Me: Got it. So, so I know, because I'm like, I'm like, is it an app? Is it a journal? Is it a— what is it, you know?

PARTICIPANT 1: Both could be cool. It could be cool if there was an app and then like if you wanted to get the journal, you could get the journal.

Me: That's kind of what I think too. Okay, I like it. I like it a lot because I, again, I do think like there should be, um, even guided breathwork or visualizations about performing. You know, voice stuff, like voice work, you know, healing voice work, not just singing lessons, but like healing voice work. I'm like all about it.

PARTICIPANT 1: I just think an app is like so accessible and people would like, it's right there, it's on your phone.

Me: I don't know how I would do that, but I will find out. Surely, surely it must be able to be done, right?

PARTICIPANT 1: You know, universe, send Sharon an app maker. Yeah.

Me: Yeah. App maker, app designer.

PARTICIPANT 1: Will you send her an app maker who can make this into an app, please? Thank you.

Me: Yeah. I want that.

PARTICIPANT 1: Okay.

Me: Okay. Is there anything about your experience that I haven't asked you about that you think is important for me to know?

PARTICIPANT 1: I feel like your questions were very good. Uh.

Me: I was trying to like pair them up with certain things about the, like, I wanted how people used it, what they found you like meaningful, what they didn't find meaningful. Were there— okay. Did you notice any changes in how you experienced the stress or pressure?

PARTICIPANT 1: Um, yes, and I think I'll continue to, yeah.

Me: Um, and okay, uh, was the pace appropriate?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah, I think it like grew naturally.

Me: And do you think that the program, was it too long, too short? Would you like, originally I thought 6 weeks. But I'm like, is that too long?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah, I think that's too long. I thought it was perfect.

Me: You think 2 weeks was good? And then you can like re-up 2 weeks at a time. Maybe, maybe that's the way it's done.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. Yeah.

Me: Okay, I love that. Um, If you had to describe A Voice Becoming to another independent artist, what would you say?

PARTICIPANT 1: Hmm. That's a cool question. Um, I would say There is this program that you can do that will ground you in these crazy times of the music industry [THEME 3] and give you coping mechanisms [THEME 2] and help with your confidence and self-identity. [THEME 3] Do you want in? Yeah.

Me: Do you want in? Yeah. Yeah. I like that. All right, that's all my questions for you.

PARTICIPANT 1: Oh my God, we did it! It was so good. You did such a good job. It's such a good program. I hope everyone has access to it.

Me: Thank you, thank you, thank you. I can't thank you enough for doing it. At some point, I really do want this to be a real thing because I've spent a year of my life on it, and, and I think it could be, and I think it could be potentially helpful.

PARTICIPANT 1: You killed it. Thanks for doing today.

###

INTERVIEW WITH PARTICIPANT 2

Me: Hi. How's everything going?

Participant 2: It's going okay. I've just been like I don't even know. I like— school has just been so hard this semester. It's, it's been crazy. I'm in, I'm in 8 classes, which I thought was manageable. [THEME 1] Well, but exams, and then while studying for exams, been studying for midterms. So I've had like back-to-back like exams and stuff going on and like just a lot. [THEME 1]

Me: Oh, half-year and full-year courses at the same time?

Participant 2: No, it's just like this semester, all of my, all of my courses that I'm in have been doing exams right before midterms. And then as soon as you're done with your exam, they're like, okay, next week is the midterm. And it's like, So, um, there's that. And then just, you know, like life stuff and all kind of different like things. So I've just been like a little scattered, a little like, oh my gosh, like I was like, it's like, why do I feel so off, and it's like, man, I haven't had— I've just been sleeping and studying and just around people all the time, and that's not how I do well. Like, I don't do great if I'm around people always, so I

Me: Oh. I gotcha.

Participant 2: I've just been going a little crazy, but I'm okay. Like, I'm doing all right. I just, you know, I just feel like I'm just like letting things Kind of slip a little, but we're getting it back on track. So anyway, that's how I'm doing.

Me: It's a good thing for you to know so you can learn how to manage it. I'm not telling you anything you don't know, right?

Participant 2: Yeah, and I've always known that I've needed just even just a little bit of time to just like decompress and get my energy back because I definitely don't get energy from being around people. So I like, I just haven't been doing that lately because it's like when you're not studying, you're like, I want to go hang out with my friends, or like, I want to like do this, or like, I have a boyfriend, like, I want to see him when I can, and I'm like You know, so I've just been going a little crazy and getting Like scattered, but I, I know what I need to do and I've been like back on track the past like 2 days, which feels like a big deal for me. So yeah.

Me: Yeah. Yeah. I, I hear you. So listen, I, I did want to thank you so much for even like considering it and trying it. Um, but what's really interesting is like just, just by having this interview together, it fills in blanks. As to why, you know, you could only do what you could do, right? And that's, that's good information. If it was just a questionnaire, it wouldn't tell the whole story.

Participant 2: Mm-hmm.

Me: But that's relevant information. So I just, you know, like there's no right or wrong in this. And this is me telling you, there's no wrong answers. Like you're not letting me down. Okay, so tell me about your overall experience in completing A Voice Becoming.

Participant 2: I, I thought it was really cool. Like, I, I really appreciated, um, the perspective of gratitude surrounding it because I feel like that really brings like a positive outlook to, you know,

your identity as a songwriter, [THEME 1] which can often feel so like daunting and insane and like scary or like weirdly shameful, [THEME 3] you know, like, I don't know, it's just like this whole thing. And so I like the idea. The idea of like reframing. Ways of talking to yourself or taking something you've said before and, you know, changing it up and kind of repeating that as an affirmation. I thought it was really, really neat and like definitely something I would love to keep doing like when I can be really intentional about it [THEME 1] because I was just kind of like, you know, but For me, like, it showed me Like, wow, this is really something that could be a practice for me, like, consistently. [THEME 2] So I thought that was really cool.

Me: Yeah. I love that. Okay, um, so what stood out most to you and did your experience change over the 2 weeks? So, talk a little bit about that, just, you know, how you started off, but then, how it went.

Participant 2: Um, well, what stood out most to me was just that like it wasn't— it was like cool and like it felt perfect because you're able to really dive into your own thoughts, but it's also not very difficult [THEME 2] or like, you know, it felt approachable, which I thought was cool.

Me: That's great.

Participant 2: What changed over the couple weeks was I— it kind of just started to slip my mind a little bit because normally I just journal anyway just to keep myself sane. I just, I write things down and when I stopped doing that, like everything else kind of fell off as well. And so I— and it wasn't the program's fault, it was, it was just my fault. But I noticed that as my stress increased, I kind of let things like self-care go, [THEME 1] was one of them. So, well,

Me: Yeah. But that's such an interesting, um, that's a very interesting, uh, like observation. Right? But your experience changed over the 2 weeks because you got really busy and stressed with school?

Participant 2: Mm-hmm. Yeah. Yeah. Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Me: Fair to say? Okay.

Participant 2: Yes.

Me: Okay, um, how did— so how— some of these are going to be repetitive, but how did completing A Voice Becoming fit into your everyday life and the demands of being an independent singer-songwriter?

Participant 2: I think I had a hard time fitting it in just because of my own imbalance. [THEME 1] Like, I didn't, I didn't find anything to be burdensome about the tasks that were required, [THEME 1] but I just let my own life get out of balance. I was like, I haven't trimmed my fingernails in 3 weeks, and I'm like, I'm like, I'm like losing my mind. So like, that was my own fault. Um, but I feel like it was very manageable when I was managing it, too. Fit it into my schedule just for a little bit of downtime. [THEME 1]

Me: Okay, um, what— and I don't know if you can, if you can answer this, but what made it easier to complete and what made it difficult?

Participant 2: Um. I mean, I think that the fact that it was kind of a self-guided thing made it easier. [THEME 2] You know, it's like you can write as little or as much as you have to, or you need, like, you know what I mean? I think that made it manageable and not very daunting, but, um, what I guess was difficult was just not having downtime, um, or yeah, yeah, yeah.

Me: Yeah, having other responsibilities. Okay, because it— because how did— because the next question here is, how did work, gigs, rehearsals, songwriting, social media, family life, or other responsibilities and that's the reality. Singer-songwriters have to wear so many hats, you know? Like, there's a lot competing for attention at any given time. Okay.

Participant 2: Mm-hmm. Okay. Uh-huh. Mm-hmm.

Me: Um, how did you experience the amount of time and effort required by the program?

Participant 2: I thought it was manageable. Like, when I was doing it, it really only took me like 20 minutes or less to just sit and kind of, you know, um, recenter my thoughts and write those things down or do the exercises, you know, so it felt manageable.

Me: Okay, um, that's awesome. Let's see. Oh, so when did you, when did you interact with it? Was it something that you did first thing in the morning? Did you do it during the day? Did you do it at night?

Participant 2: At nighttime, I'd say, like after the day was over, which is probably why I ended up kind of like not doing great because, um, you know, I just, as soon as I sit in my bed, I just fall asleep. [THEME 1] And so I would, I start writing things down and then I start falling asleep. And so like, oh my gosh. So yeah, nighttime though.

Me: Yeah. Okay. All right. Listen, that's good information. Total judgment-free zone. I never told people how to use this, right? And because I wanted everyone to do what works best for them.

Participant 2: Mm-hmm. Yeah. Mm-hmm. Yeah, yeah.

Me: I know why I wrote it, but you know, it's different to actually do it, right? Okay. So, how did you interact with it? Did you write in a notebook? Did you write on your computer? How did you use it? Because I didn't tell anyone what to do, you know, I wanted to let everyone decide how to do it.

Participant 2: Yeah. Yeah, I write everything down on paper. I'm like a big paper, paper gal. So I have a journal that I keep everything in, and I, I wrote it in here.

Me: Amazing. Okay, so if I ask what influenced whether you completed or didn't complete the practices on a particular day, what would— I mean, that's the same way of asking a question, but how would you answer that one?

Participant 2: Um, honestly, most was homework. Like, I already had so much reading to be doing. And any downtime I had, I would be studying or rehearsing music. And so I think my school schedule was the main thing that influenced my ability to complete it. [THEME 1]

Me: Okay, were there any particular practices that you found yourself wanting to do or avoiding or putting off, and why? Was there anything like the breathwork, the gratitude, the— is there

anything that you engaged with where you were like, yep, yep, I got that? And then other things where you're like, I don't want to do that? Yeah.

Participant 2: Um, I mean, it's weird because the things that I really wanted to do were the things I was avoiding. Like, I really, like, got excited about the idea of, like, you know, the self-compassion stuff and like the sung affirmations.

Me: Right. Say that again about the sung affirmations? That cut out. What about that?

Participant 2: Oh, I said like they were, they seemed really exciting and really cool to me. Like, I really enjoyed that. But when I did get busy, the things that seemed to take more time or mental energy were the things that I kind of let go of. [THEME 1] And so those are the things I like really wanted to do the most. I was just excited about that. But whenever I got busy, it felt like that was the most time-consuming.

Me: Okay, okay, no, that's fair. All right, so thinking about the different components— breathwork, gratitude, self-compassion, reflection and sung affirmations, which practices, if any, felt most useful or meaningful to you?

Participant 2: I think the gratitude and the— what was the list of them you said?

Me: The different breathwork, the gratitude journaling, the self-compassion exercises, and then there were some reflective prompts every now and then. And the sung affirmations. So which practices felt most useful or meaningful to you?

Participant 2: I think gratitude and self-compassion. I think those are both things that I could use so much work in and practice, and, you know, reframing in my head. So I think those were very useful and very cool. Good to need to look at stuff for sure.

Me: And then were there any that felt less useful or uncomfortable or difficult or irrelevant?

Participant 2: Um, nothing felt irrelevant. They all felt very, like, purposeful and you know, not just kind of random. I think breathwork has always been tough because, like, I just don't feel relaxed by breathwork. It stresses me out. [THEME 2] Like, for some reason, I've never— Yeah, it's always made me feel anxious. And so, I start breathing and as soon as I start to think about my breath, I get anxious. [THEME 2] So that one's a little uncomfortable, even though I'm sure it's good for me. I just don't enjoy breathwork per se.

Me: Yeah that's really interesting. So what would you think if there was a guided breathwork where you're just listening, you don't have to do anything but breathe, and someone guides you through it? Like a recording or whatever. Would that change your mind, do you think?

Participant 2: Maybe a little bit. But also, like, mine's a little more complicated because I have, like, weird, like, lung strength stuff. And as soon as I start to be, like, intentional about my breath, I get more cognizant of the weird breathing issues I already have and so it makes me like feel like I can't breathe. It like makes me— it's like, it's just a weird thing. And so it's not like bad for me, but it's also just like, like, I'm like, oh my gosh. Like, so that's like, like a weird, like, side health issue that makes it more like kind of bizarre feeling for me. Um, I get like, I get air hunger sometimes, like where I, I breathe in and it doesn't feel like my lungs have fully gotten breath. And

so it feels a little weird. I don't get that very often, but as soon as I start breathing exercises, I can get that air hunger where I feel like I'm probably not getting my breath all the way in. It doesn't impact my singing much at all unless I'm having like a bad allergy episode because my breathing is more regulated when I'm singing. But, I think a guided one would be easier too because it's, it's more so, it's like somebody instructing you rather than me just sitting there analyzing my, my own body. [THEME 2] it's like there's other things to focus on. So I think guided would be nice as well.

Me: All right, awesome. Was there anything that you would remove, change, or add? What was your experience of using your singing voice as part of a wellbeing practice rather than solely for performance or music making?

Participant 2: It feels very uplifting and kind of like edifying to my soul. [THEME 3] Like it feels like, it feels very spiritual to me because I sing prayers a lot, which feels very meaningful to me. And so Yeah, it felt very calming and very centering. [THEME 3] And I really enjoyed that. I thought that was really cool.

Me: I love that. That's amazing. Did you notice anything different in your relationship with your voice or your body during the 2 weeks or during the time that you were engaging with AVB?

Participant 2: Um, I noticed like when it comes to the singing exercises or just the whole thing?

Me: The whole thing.

Participant 2: Oh, um. I mean, I noticed how much like re-centering I needed to do, like, because it's, it's easy to kind of coast through life and not really realize where you're at. And so in the beginning, I was kind of coasting, but as I started getting more into, you know, like, you know, realizing like, oh, I've got a journal now and I've got to, you know, it made me realize how much decompression I required, and so it helped me get more in touch emotionally, in a way I didn't realize before. So it helped me become more self-aware, I'd say. [THEME 2]

Me: It helped you become more self-aware.

Participant 2: Mm-hmm.

Me: Yeah, sorry, there's a little glitch. I was just sort of repeating it for the recording.

Participant 2: Yeah.

Me: Okay, so did the sung affirmations feel different from simply thinking, speaking, or writing an affirmation?

Participant 2: Yes, for sure. For me, they do, because singing feels so much more connected to who I am as a person. [THEME 3] Um, rather than just my thoughts. I don't know, it feels very connected with who I am. And so it felt more meaningful and, you know, intimate with myself, if that makes sense. [THEME 3]

Me: It does, it does.

Participant 2: So yeah.

Me: Did you notice any changes in yourself during the time that you were interacting with the program that you associate with participating in the program, like, did you notice anything related to managing stress? Managing self-compassion or self-criticism, resilience. You just said self-awareness. Relationship with your singing voice, anything like that? Your identity as an artist?

Participant 2: Um, I noticed that on the days that I did do journaling and doing what I was supposed to do, it did help me manage stress and help me to feel more present. [THEME 2] For sure, I did notice that.

Me: Okay, awesome. Were there areas where you noticed little or no change?

Participant 2: Um, Maybe the breathwork, like I said, it was just kind of like, you know, not my thing.

Me: Not your thing— And that's okay, we're all different in the way we come at this. Did A Voice Becoming feel specifically designed for someone like you, an independent female singer-songwriter? Why or why not?

Participant 2: It did, because I feel like it's very intentional. With the thought process of a female singer-songwriter, like needing self-compassion and gratitude. Like, I feel like that's very much true for every female singer-songwriter that I know, that we all kind of need to work on or just put into practice. Just, you know, gratefulness and, you know, being kind to ourselves. So yeah, for sure.

Me: Now that the 2 weeks are over, are there any practices you expect to continue using?

Participant 2: Gratitude journaling, for sure.

Me: Yeah. Yeah, okay, and, and just why, why that one in particular?

Participant 2: I mean, it like, I think before the program I didn't realize how negative a lot of my journaling is [THEME 2] but journaling even if it's negative, it doesn't always cause me to spiral. Like it still feels helpful for me. But I think gratitude in writing is powerful and just kind of shifted my perspective on stuff anyway. So, um, yeah, I love the change of perspective in my, in my journal. My journal got a lot more, you know, uplifting. [THEME 2]

Me: Yeah. Listen, I can trigger myself with my own reflective writing.

Participant 2: Mm-hmm.

Me: Okay, so. If I offered this, A Voice Becoming, to another group of independent female singer-songwriters, what would you tell me to keep, change, add, or remove?

Participant 2: Um, I would keep a lot of it, honestly. Like, I can't think of anything I would take out because I think breathwork is still helpful. Maybe like for people who get stressed about breathwork, like me, like maybe offering some more like, like guidance in breathwork or like I don't know, like put on this song and then do this for the duration of the, you know what I mean? Like, I don't know, I can't think of another thing, but

Me: Actually, that's really cool. I mean, when we listen to music, it is a form of focus because if you're really listening to lyrics and you're really in the music, you're not thinking about other things.

Participant 2: Yeah, yeah, so that could, that could be fun. Maybe just like, you know, finding even like instrumental music that is uplifting. To like kind of include that in the daily, like listen to this and then do your breathwork while you do that. I think that would be fun.

Me: Love that.

Participant 2: Because I, I get nervous and like I get weirded out by silence.

Me: Yeah, but that's so cool. I mean, that's so relevant. And I mean, it's what you guys do. Right? It's like you constantly listen to songs all day long and sort of deconstruct them and see what the writer was doing from a craft perspective, but also from an enjoyment perspective.

Participant 2: Mm-hmm.

Me: I love that. Awesome. Okay, is there anything about your experience that I haven't asked you about that you think is important for me to know?

Participant 2: Um. No, I feel like we kind of covered it all. I mean, yeah, the program was great and I look forward to going through it again when I can be more intentional about it and make a practice out of what I learned from it rather than just kind of a one-off thing. But yeah, it was cool.

Me: All right, do you think 2 weeks was too long, too short? What do you think about that?

Participant 2: I think 2 weeks is manageable. I think like a few months would be a little intense. [THEME 2] That feels like a big commitment. But then a week, I could imagine that's not really enough time to make something a practice. So. So I thought that was interesting.

Participant 2: Yeah.

Me: Okay, and then here's my last one, okay? If you had to describe A Voice Becoming to another independent artist, what would you say?

Participant 2: Um. I would say it's a program designed to uplift women and singer-songwriters and just approach yourself with compassion. And, you know, it's refreshing that there's something that has to do with being a female songwriter that's not just for the sake of success, [THEME 3] you know what I mean? Like, it's very much just self-care as an artist, like the artist's way. But if there's no, like, motive of, like, branding or, you know, I don't know, I feel like there's so many things that you can get into where it feels like there's some other, like, hidden motive, but it feels very just like uplifting for your soul as a creative person. [THEME 3] And so yeah, it's a program meant for getting more in touch with yourself as an artist and your voice.

Me: I love it. So, all right, so thank, thank you. I can't thank you enough. I can't thank you enough for taking part in it and your insights about it, because it's— even though you didn't engage for, you know, some people did all 14 days. Some people didn't, and that's fine, right? Like, okay, understanding the reason for that is important and that's valuable data. And so, you know, you crushed it.

Participant 2: Thank you, thank you. I appreciate you.

Me: It was great. You're welcome. Thank you.

Participant 2: Yeah, well, and I'm just glad that I have these practices now that I can, that I can use and I can think about.

Me: Yay! Well, thank you so much, honey, and hang in there, okay? When are all of your tests over?

Participant 2: I will. Um, I have more midterms this week. I've had exams every single week for the past 3 weeks, so I'm like, I think they're, they're about to be over next week.

Me: Yeah. I'm excited. So, all right, well, thank you again and, um, you know, good luck with the rest of your, um, exams and stuff, your midterms.

Participant 2: Cool. Thank you. Thank you so much.

Me: All right.

###

INTERVIEW WITH PARTICIPANT 3

Interviewer: Hi.

Participant 3: Good morning!

Interviewer: Good morning, how are you?

Participant 3: Hello. I'm good. How are you?

Interviewer: Okay. So. First of all, thank you so much for taking the time, because I know that was a big ask to take the time to, um, to work with Voice Becoming. Uh, tell me about your overall experience completing it? And, what stands out most? Or, did your experience change over the two weeks? Tell me a little bit about your experience.

Participant 3: Sure. Okay. Yeah. So, it was pretty good. I think my biggest thing first and foremost of, like context with any difficulties was my ADHD. [THEME 1] It went really well overall. Um, and I felt like it was a really great routine. [THEME 2] Um... where do I want to start? Yeah, the gratitude and self-compassion were always, like, really, really great [THEME 2] . Definitely saw improvements about how I was going about my day. [THEME 2] I feel like I generally respond really well to journaling and writing and just, like, having visual things written down, like, I love to, like, look at them, and, um, I feel like they really actively change my thought process and my feelings and my mood throughout the day, [THEME 2] so...that was great. Breathwork was one of those things that I think I struggled with a little bit because of ADHD things. But it's kind of the Wild West up in here in my brain sometimes.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Participant 3: I think the box breathing was great, except sometimes I, like, couldn't picture the box, and I would sometimes have trouble with visualizing. But I kind of just modified and just did like the four counts and the holding and the whatever. And I still tried to just like maintain whatever focus I could. I kind of just made some modifications there [ALL THEME 2]. Kind of similar things with attention to the other breathwork stuff that was kind of a 8 to 10 reps or stuff like that. Um...But other than that, I just kind of really needed to, like, be reigning in my brain.

Interviewer: Which is really interesting and so valid.

Participant 3: Yeah, so that was probably a recurring theme throughout with the breathwork. Um, really anywhere, like, when I'm just, like, closing my eyes, and, like, this happens when I'm falling asleep, my mind wanders, and it's like... and I know that's totally normal and expected, but yeah, I'm, like, used to that happening, so I was like, okay, this makes sense. But when I was able to do it start to finish and be really tuned in, I think it was really helpful, and it was a source of regulation and just kind of centeredness. [THEME 2] I think what I found is the journaling parts were really great for me at the beginning of the day, and um... I did a lot of the breath stuff in the beginning of the day, too, because that's when I was sitting down to do this. But I do think that some of the breath work could have been more beneficial to me at night. And I tried that. I kinda separated that out, like, a couple times, and I feel like that was good.

Participant 3: But I'm trying to think what else. Yes. Okay. So the sung affirmations.

Interviewer: Yes.

Participant 3: Those were tricky for me. Those were very tricky for me. [THEME 2] Again, with my brain in my attention/interest in what I was doing, not in any type of way other than the dopamine of where my brain wanted to be going, and it was not...like writing a song about the affirmations at that point in the morning. My brain did not want to do that, [THEME 1] and so I pushed through, and what I struggled with was like my working memory felt like, which is a totally other issue that I've been kind of dealing with, but like they weren't coming out memorable, so I wasn't remembering them in the short term. So that was hard, so I would use... a couple times I used, like, other melodies that I knew, because the writing of it felt, like, a little difficult sometimes.[THEME 2]

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Participant 3: But yeah, it was weird to look at myself and sing to myself in the mirror. It was very strange [THEME 3] and I think there were days that I did it, and then there were days that I actually just stood there and spoke them to myself, because that felt better. [THEME 2]

Interviewer: That felt better, yeah.

Participant 3: It just felt it felt more, like, one of the questions on your follow-up was, "I felt connected to my singing voice, like, while doing this", and I'm like I kind of did, but I also kind of didn't, because I felt like a little bit of an extra step in terms of getting the message ingrained into me. I felt like I got more connected a little better by just speaking the affirmations to myself and reading them. So that, just for me, and I know, like, everyone's different. I took note of that. It felt, um... okay, this is like a weird way to describe it, but a little bit like performing for myself. [THEME 3]

Interviewer: But... but there are no wrong answers here, right? Your experience of something is never wrong.

Participant 3: Yeah. This past couple of weeks have also been uniquely interesting for me in the mental health regard, because I feel like I've been figuring some things out about how my brain works that...does kind of impact this, so it was interesting that kind of multiple things were kind of colliding. Things to do with neurodivergence and not having a neurotypical brain, ADHD, et cetera. And being in therapy and kind of making some realizations about... So like the performing thing, feeling like...I've found some answers that have kind of explained why I might kind of be have been feeling that I don't know how much to like say on here, but I think my experience being like not a neurotypical person does play into that. I guess I'll leave it there.

Participant 3: I think that the kind of singing approach to the affirmations might affect me differently if, like, certain things weren't also going on. The spoken just felt... felt a little more natural for me, which I tried to, like, let my body just kinda go for what felt the most comfortable without pushing myself. Like, there were days where it was a lot easier to, like, sing it, and then there were days where I was like, this isn't really feeling like it's helping. Um, so kind of... kind of mixed it up and, like, used it as an opportunity to modify where I felt fit.

Interviewer: Okay, I love that. All right. How did completing the program fit into your everyday life and the demands of being an independent singer-songwriter? I mean, you guys wear a lot of hats.

Participant 3: It fit pretty well. I mean, I'm usually, like, up journaling in the morning.[THEME 1] Um, I think... There were days where it was harder mentally to engage than others. [THEME 1] I

had a few, late nights, early morning situations, and there were some days where I was out from eight thirty in the morning to eleven PM, or something like that, and I couldn't do it one day.[THEME 1] So, um, yeah, there were, there were, like, one or two times where I was doing two in a day.

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay.

Participant 3: But other than that, it was like really manageable, and I spent between 15 and 30 minutes most days, depending on how much mental capacity and time I had.[THEME 1] But I think the practice of just like sitting down and doing it is really beneficial and just setting aside that time to be grounded and quiet and focusing on yourself. So, yeah, I definitely did it, and there's usually time in my day that I'm kind of dedicating to similar things, so...

Interviewer: Yeah, so what made it easier to complete and what made it difficult?

Participant 3: Mmm.

Interviewer: Because it sounds like... I mean, and I don't want to put words in your mouth, right? But you decided... you decided to put time aside to do it.

Participant 3: No, go for it. Mm-hmm.

Participant 3: So I, yeah, this is another like part of the past couple weeks, but how I respond to external pressure... I kind of have a push-and-pull situation with that, where I have two kind of different things operating against each other. It came down to my mental capacity that day.[THEME 1] I definitely had the time. And it was basically like, what is working against my flow of the morning of the things that I see down the line that I need to do, and the anxiety that I'm having about everything I need to get done, and regulating myself, and everything like that. So it was definitely the push and pull of the external expectation of it all. BUT, what was helping the ADHD, (because I feel like sometimes I have trouble starting things internally) was also the structure of having this as a thing, because it has a deadline, it has a trajectory, it has instructions, which are all very beneficial to me.[THEME 2] I love a rule, I love an instruction situation, so...

Interviewer: Love a guardrail, right? Yeah, thanks.

Participant 3: Yes, love a guardrail. The guidelines of it all were very helpful and made it a lot easier for me to do. I [THEME 2] But yeah, so definitely I think it was just like my general headspace that day that made it easier or harder.

Interviewer: Yeah, thank you.

Interviewer: So, so let me ask you a question because there were some guardrails, but there weren't others, right? Like, I didn't tell people what time of day to do this and it's so funny that you say you started your day with it because I just always imagined people doing this sort of at night, which is really interesting, you know? Like, neither is wrong.

Participant 3: Wow.

Interviewer: I just wanted it to fit into your day somewhere. That's all I wanted. I delivered it to you guys as a file, and then you could do it but HOW did you do it? Did you write... physically write, or did you use your computer? How did you engage with it?

Participant 3: I used my journal for this year, so I've been writing it.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Participant 3: Well, not every day, but mostly every day. I use that same journal. Yeah.

Interviewer: So, if I were to offer this again, do you think a hard-form journal is the right form?

Participant 3: I definitely think so. I mean, I use my technology at my sessions and my little Google Docs, but I think when it comes to, like, inner work and connecting, I want to be holding a pen and writing in a book, [THEME 2] and I know you probably feel the same way. Yeah.

Interviewer: I do. But, you know, I was born in the analog era, right? No, I do. I want to see it. I want to touch it. I want to see those colors. Exactly. I do.

Participant 3: Yeah, feel connected to the world. Yes, like my journal is so like, I spend so much time picking out my journal every year because it's going to be the thing that I open every day. And so I'm like, I want to treat it. I tried to make it like it's supposed to be like a ritual, so I very much took that to heart, I think. [THEME 2]

Interviewer: Yeah. And I kind of wanted this to be a ritual, you know? It's like, I sort of like, you know, I mean, shoot, light a candle...and take a few minutes for you.

Participant 3: Yeah, yeah. I did that too. I had my coffee or my tea.

Interviewer: Or something, right? Like, a drink of something from a beautiful glass, or, like, something. I, I really did. And, like, look, now I'm drinking out of a, um, you know a Mason jar. Okay. How did you experience the time and effort required by the program? Did it ever feel like another task you had to complete? Were there days where it felt easier or harder? Was there anything that felt unnecessarily demanding?

Participant 3: Hmm, definitely no to that last part. Nothing unnecessarily demanding. [THEME 1] I think there were days, as I said, just depending on what I was feeling and where my brain was pulling me that day, and it would be kind of varied with how easily I was able to jump in and be very mentally there for it. [THEME 1] But it was easy to do. Um, again, I had the time. I forget the beginning of your question.

Interviewer: How did you experience the amount of time and effort required? Did it ever feel like another task you had to complete?

Participant 3: A couple of days, but that helps me do it. I think I respond well, like, even if I feel like certain pushes and pulls away from things, having the guardrail and the commitment helps me get things done and complete. And this goes for tasks and other types of things, too.

Interviewer: One thing that's really interesting is I think you may know that some of this was influenced by Julia Cameron's work with The Artist's Way. And it is interesting to me that the very

first thing she does in that program is she has people draw up a contract with themselves to basically to commit to her program. You make a commitment to yourself. I didn't go that far. I was just kind of hoping that the program itself would be useful enough that people would want to come back to it.

Participant 3: Yeah.

Interviewer: That's sort of where I was coming from with it. But what influenced whether you completed or didn't complete the practices on a particular day?

Participant 3: Yeah, I had, like, I had, like, two songwriting sessions. I think I had a work shift. I think I had therapy that morning. Yeah, it just was a very long day, and I was like, I'm not doing this today, respectfully.

Interviewer: Well, and that's, that, this is the thing with, with independent, early, emerging, early stage, female singer-songwriters? Do you guys wear more hats than anybody?

Participant 3: I think to answer the second part of that question, the gratitude journaling were the exercises that I was always really engaged with and ready to do. Again, the writing. The more abstract things were what I struggled with more, I think. [THEME 2] But the kind of tactile writing and reflecting. Love to do that. [THEME2]

Interviewer: Exactly, which makes sense in terms of, like, this is who you are, right? This is what you do. So that makes perfect sense that that would be...sort of aligned for who you are as a person, right? And then the breathwork being a little bit...challenging.

Participant 3: Yeah. I also would say with the breath work. I think...had there been, like, an audio...telling you what to do.[THEME 2] Because I felt like it was a little hard sometimes with the longer ones. There were a few that were easier to follow on paper, and, like, remember the things to do, and then there were other times where I was, like, opening my eyes to, like, look what I had to do. [THEME 2]

Interviewer: If it was an app...that's really easy just to press a button and to do that. Do you know what I mean?

Participant 3: Wait, that's cool. And then you can also log, like, each day, like, on the calendar. I don't know what it would look like, but you can kind of check the gratitude, you know, like, you can choose to input it, or you can not, but you can kind of check it off.

Interviewer: Right. Which, you know, a streak always feels good, let's be real. The dopamine of it all.

Participant 3: Yep. I was gonna say the dopamine of it all. Like Duolingo, oh my gosh. But for this, yeah. And then have like a section that's like, okay, today's breathwork, press play, kind of take it. Yeah.

Interviewer: Right, right.

Participant 3: Well, yeah, and I actually wrote... I took a note about that saying it was interesting that you didn't specify what time of day, but, the journaling, the beginning part of... basically everything except the breathwork I was doing mostly in the morning, and then I didn't do the

breathwork in the morning, and, like, tried to do that later on in the day, and then struggled more or less with that, but, like, I... I kind of did make some separation, like, on my own, based on what I want to do. [THEME 2]

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: And that's okay. And that's okay. I'm trying to drill down on what is useful for users. Because the reality is there's traditional therapy, but not every female musician or singer-songwriter can afford therapy. There's a gap in the literature that says there needs to be interventions for this population. Okay, well, what does that intervention look like? And the only thing that they've said is it needs to be affordable and accessible.

Participant 3: Yeah.

Interviewer: And then the third thing is, which I'm thinking about, like, is a sense of community, because this career is often a little bit of a lonely pursuit at times. Like, you have collaborators, but there are a lot of people who don't. Like, if they're not in Nashville, and they're writing songs by themselves.

Participant 3: Or even, I think that's a great point, and I think that even people here, even within friend groups, there are different experiences and micro-isolations between people, [THEME 3] and how they work, and who they work with, and different reasons you're pulled in different directions, and feeling lonely, and, like, there's so... there is a lot, and, like, even just on the intersection of the business and the creative--like there's so much that we don't know how it works and they don't really teach you. There's not really like the college classes you go to. Like I learned yesterday about another royalty collection service that I needed to be on that I'm not on, and I'm on 5 of them, and I've been here for 5 years, and so even just the feeling of always feeling like you don't know what's going on. [THEME 3] Well, okay, so SAG-AFTRA, which is weird because I'm not a performing act at this point, so you would think like I would not have to register with them, but if I'm doing Background Vocals on stuff, I need to be registered to get paid. Did not realize I could get paid for that.

Interviewer: I didn't realize that for a songwriter, but it makes sense if you're singing on a track.

Participant 3: And I'm registered with so many royalty collection services, so many, and I'm working on so many like background vocal projects. So maybe it's kind of intuitive but I did not think of that. And I'm on all the writing ones, I think, I hope. But yeah, I learned that yesterday, and I was like, Oh, my God! Like no one told me that--no one! I went to school. I went to school for music like this!

Interviewer: No, I know you did. I know, I know.

Participant 3: And I didn't learn that. And it's like, oh my god, so even in just, how the business works and always doing all the right things in writing, on the business side, socially networking, always feeling like you're missing something or that someone is ahead of you knows more, and it's just, there's so much about it that is isolating, [THEME 3] and I think, to your point, like, they don't even have to be in another state or a different music city, like, even just our own individual experiences pursuing music are so different. And then you add in all of the personal stuff and... so I do think the community of it all and, like, encouraging openness and conversations, and... I don't know. I feel like that is great.

Participant 3: I feel like a lot of the anxiety that we try to mitigate by doing these things, they're great tools for regulation in the moment, and to, like, kind of do your best to get through. And so I think if there were, alongside tools of, like, coping with anxiety and stress, a community forum to ask questions, that would be kind of a cool supplemental thing. [THEME 2]

Interviewer: Yeah, thank you. Thinking about the different components, we already talked about this a little bit, breathwork, gratitude, self-compassion, the reflective prompts, and the sung affirmations, which practices, if any, felt most useful or meaningful to you?

Participant 3: Self-compassion, easily. Yeah, I need that shit. [THEME 2] Like, the gratitude also is really, really important to me, but this self-compassion thing is purposeful. Gratitude, it's different. It's not the same. But I think it's also very helpful.

Interviewer: Okay, were there any that felt less useful, uncomfortable, difficult, or irrelevant? To you.

Participant 3: I wouldn't say irrelevant, but the sung affirmations... that... just that piece of it for me was hard, and the questions after the end of program report that were like, do you feel connected to your singing voice? I was confused because I'm like, I do. I do feel connected to my singing voice, but there was something about the sung affirmations I didn't really connect with as much, because it was difficult and it was uncomfortable. [THEME 3] And I'm like, maybe if I did it even longer, maybe it would start to connect with it, I don't really know. It just didn't feel the most natural to me. And I actually feel like I felt the benefit of just like speaking it and writing it a little bit more, without the added steps of writing the melody. [THEME 3] Yeah, I just didn't connect with as much, but I do connect with my voice... But I am not the artist that is, like, on tour, that is performing every night, that...

Interviewer: I'm with you on that. Okay, so was there anything that you would remove, change or add?

Participant 3: I think the audio breathwork, as I said, would be great. [THEME 2] I don't think I would remove anything, I think... I didn't really want it to be that different. And the breathwork was good and like I felt again, it's like the external... I won't... I don't think pressure is the right word, but, like, the guide rails of the... the guidelines of it were making me want to commit to getting it, you know? [THEME 2] I was like, okay, this is a program, it's like the contract thing, like, I obviously didn't sign one at the beginning for myself, but I was like it's a program, so I want to do it.

Participant 3: I think I liked that it was flexible, but also had the instructional piece of it. [THEME 2] Yeah, I'll leave it there.

Interviewer: Yeah, OK, so OK, I love that. All right, so.

Interviewer: All right, so here's the... so we've talked a little bit about... we've hit on a lot of this already, but what was your experience of using your singing voice as part of a well-being practice rather than solely for performance or music making?

Participant 3: Yeah, it just didn't feel the most natural for me personally. [THEME 3] I didn't feel, like, bad. I just was, like, how do I, given that it felt a little... weird and uncomfortable. But speaking didn't. Yeah, but I did it, with the idea that I'm doing this for the program.

Participant 3: But also, like, I'm always singing to myself. Like, I'm always singing, if not out and about. Like, I'm always doing that, so I don't know exactly what about it...

Interviewer: Well, it is interesting, I think, like, without going down this hole, but, like...I also wonder, too, you've also spent a lot of years training and working on your voice, right? So you're very comfortable with it. Like, versus...the disastrous singing auditions that I saw at the Bluebird Cafe. Not everyone has had that kind of training.

Participant 3: Yep.

Interviewer: Right? Like, and so, I sort of would wonder how somebody who hasn't had that experience would experience using their voice like this in this kind of program. And it's... it's hard to say. Everybody...

Participant 3: What do you mean? What do you, are you attributing like a difference of?

Interviewer: Yeah, like, um, because you are such, like a, like a heavy voice user regularly, right? Like, you've worked on your voice. You've worked carefully, intimately, for well over a decade, you know what I mean? And so, I would think that that sung affirmations wouldn't feel that different to you versus somebody who, like, the voice is not first in what they do. They've never trained it. They don't have that sort of that intimate knowing of the voice in that way.

Participant 3: Mm-hmm.

Interviewer: I don't know.

Participant 3: Yeah. Interesting.

Interviewer: Um, did you notice any changes in yourself during the two weeks that you, uh, during the two weeks that you associate with participating? Did you feel any changes in yourself as a person, or were you able to manage your stress, or did you catch yourself maybe with, like, self-criticism, or anything like that?

Participant 3: That's a very interesting question. I've noticed a lot of changes with myself, specifically in the two weeks with this program. I don't know if I can attribute it to the program. [THEME 2] But I responded to my two weeks of life in the lens of doing this program, so I think I... in the gratitude and the self-compassion, I was kind of directing toward just how life was... like, I think I was responding to what kind of was going on in the last couple weeks, um, with this, and it helped, especially the self-compassion, and the gratitude, [THEME 2] too. But, I think there were other sources of some change in my life over the past few weeks, but in a lot of ways, I actually feel like this was the perfect time for me to do it, do this program, and it really helped me to take stock of the changes and the feelings, emotions and being nice to myself. [THEME 2] So, yeah.

Interviewer: Did you notice anything related to resilience, or self-awareness, or your identity as an artist, anything? Does that light up anywhere?

Participant 3: Resilience, I think, and the constant showing up. I feel like I'm always showing up, but the reminder and the 14 days of actually showing up and doing it. Just reminding myself, I think the resilience piece is a self-fulfilling prophecy to, like, repeatedly show up and have that

streak, if you will. [THEME 1] Um, and no matter what's going on, like, you're showing up for yourself, and that obviously translates to artistry and everything that I'm doing, so...

Interviewer: And, do you think those things eventually feed into...having a greater authenticity as an artist, right? Like, because becoming aware and getting quiet and being very real, does it help that...artistic identity, I guess.

Participant 3: Yeah. No, same, I feel. I think any work that you do on yourself translates into artistry. [THEME 3] I just think that's true. I think I struggle with always needing like an answer and a conclusion and a whatever and ruminating and, like, all of that. And, I think there's a healthy stopping point, which I need to learn, but, like, I think even the missteps and the... like, whatever the journey is, I think that all kind of affects the art, and the person making the art, and the pursuit of understanding what's going on, and wanting to be the best that you can be. [THEME 3]

Interviewer: I can't even. That was so good. So well said. Did a voice becoming feel specifically designed for someone like you, an independent female singer-songwriter? Why or why not?

Participant 3: It felt very specifically designed for me. It very much did. [THEME 2] Um...

Interviewer: Do you think this could have been a general well-being program for anyone, or was there something about it that made it particularly relevant to artists and songwriters? So, through that lens.

Participant 3: particularly relevant? Well, obviously, the nature of it, the kind of context of it is for artists, so it's kind of hard to separate that, but I do think that all of the practices individually and together could benefit anyone. [THEME 2]

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay.

Participant 3: Like, I'm thinking of, like, my family and...the friends that I have outside of music, like...I don't know if this is... I honestly feel like it might be even more beneficial to those people, because those are people that...Are not typically connected to themselves in the way that we are.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Participant 3: Um, and maybe they're doing...9 to 5, I'm thinking of my sister, who is so busy, and she's studying for the LSATs, and she's working full-time, and she has reported to me that she like, feels like she doesn't even have time to, like, book a therapy session, let alone go to one for an hour. And, um, I was telling her about this, and she was like this sounds really cool, and I was telling her if she could find time to do something like this, I feel like she would really benefit.

Interviewer: Just take a moment, right? And sometimes we just can't.

Participant 3: Take a moment.

Participant 3: Yeah, yeah, but I feel really grateful to be doing what I'm doing, even though it's really hard, but I feel like I'm just very connected to who and what I am, and how, and I get to think about myself all the time, which is, like, kind of annoying sometimes, but...

Interviewer: It's part of the job, though. People don't realize, but yeah.

Participant 3: It's part of the job. Yeah. Right. So I'm like, if like the broader population, you know, if they were like, oh, how can I be nicer to myself? What are the things that I'm grateful for every day? You know, sing some affirmations, or write them down and speak them. I feel like that would be... I definitely feel like it could be...broader, but right now it is obviously specified and works wonders for us. Or even, like, they could take a different melody. Like, I did some of the days where I was like, I don't have it in me to craft a melody today. Like, I'm gonna go to my writing session and do that all day, but I'll take a melody that I love, that I already know and set my intention to that, [THEME 2] and I think those were the times that I felt most connected to it, the singing affirmations. [THEME 3]

Interviewer: That's really cool. Yeah, because you didn't have to reinvent the wheel to do it. Now that those two weeks are over, are there any practices you expect to continue using?

Participant 3: Yeah, definitely the gratitude and self-compassion and the breath work and honestly, the saying things out loud [THEME 2] and maybe when I feel up for a challenge because I do love a challenge and I love to push myself. Maybe throw in a little song affirmation here and there. But definitely, like, the breathwork still is just hard with the focus, but, like, it's something that I do want to get a lot better at. Um, and...basically, I know the design of it was to do it repeatedly, so that it kind of shows up as an immediate tool when you need it. And that's, like, also what, like, my therapist says -- you want to do it so that you have it ready to go. Um, so I feel like I don't quite have it where it's ready to go, and I could be working on that and trying to incorporate it more before I go to sleep. [THEME 2] But. I mean, yeah, really all aspects of it feel really natural to me to keep doing. [THEME 2]

Interviewer: Okay, so, if I offered the program to another group of independent female singer-songwriters, what would you tell me to keep, change, add, or remove? I know, some of these are getting repetitive.

Participant 3: No, that's okay.

Participant 3: I think the audio for the breathwork [THEME 2]. Just so that takes the guesswork out of following the directions and remembering what to do and the, yeah, kind of guided. [THEME 2]

Interviewer: Yeah, thank you.

Participant 3: I don't think anything else really.

Interviewer: Okay. Were there any particular moments that felt especially meaningful?

Participant 3: The self-compassion. There was one prompt that asked about like describe a mistake that you made, and how you spoke to yourself and how to direct that... I was like, okay, this feels good, like...That felt meaningful because I feel like I struggle with self-forgiveness. [THEME 2]

Interviewer: Yeah, thank you.

Participant 3: Um, yeah, I think a lot of the... that's the first one that came to mind, but a lot of the self-compassion ones just felt like I really needed them, so they felt particularly, like, stand out, um... These are good reminders. And I love being grateful. So it feels good to note every day.

Because it...Feels good in your body. It feels really good to take stock of the amazing things you have in your life. [THEME 2]

Interviewer: Our cup is full, at least for those moments where we're doing that, and that's a... that's a really important thing.

Participant 3: Well, also, I think the gratitude and the self-compassion, like, your brain sees what it focuses on, so the whole point of doing it and focusing on it and giving attention to it means you're seeing the good, and seeing the positive, and...you're creating literal space in your brain for that. And that, as I said in the beginning, like going to a session or going throughout the rest of my day having thought about things like that just makes you approach your day better, like.[THEME 2]

Interviewer: The RAS, the system in our brains where, if you think about a red car, you see it everywhere. And we can develop that. It's like, it's like that muscle that says, okay, I spent some time being grateful this morning. Now I'm going to find that in the rest of my day and the days after that, too, because that's where we've put our attention.

Participant 3: Yeah.

Interviewer: Is there let's see, let's see, let's see. Did you notice any changes in how you experience stress or pressure?

Participant 3: Differences...Not so much, I don't think. But it was helpful to navigate life. [THEME 2] I think just taking stock of the good things and taking the space to be kinder to myself helped in general. Yeah.

Interviewer: Is there anything about the experience that we haven't discussed that you feel is important?

Participant 3: I don't think so, kind of covered it on my end.

Interviewer: Okay, and last one. If you had to describe a voice becoming to another independent artist, what would you say?

Participant 3: Ooh.

Participant 3: Hmm. Okay. Organizing thoughts. Please hold. Um...having an ADHD moment where I'm, like, struggling to organize my thoughts, but, um...

Interviewer: That's okay.

Participant 3: I mean, it's just very beneficial for the artist. It's a program that, yeah, if you struggle to...Create regular time to process your life and your emotions and your thoughts, [THEME 1]um, which is...arguably very necessary for someone in the arts. Um, yeah, it's a really well-tailored program for creatives and beyond. [THEME 2] And yeah, it's designed to help you just get in touch with your true self and, um...develop...healthy kinds of strategies to navigate this really difficult industry. [THEME 3] And there are things that are really applicable beyond the program and just employing in everyday life. And just, like, kind of...Help you feel grounded when you need to feel grounded.

Participant 3: Um, yeah.

Interviewer: I can't thank you enough for your time and your effort and your thoughtful answers.

###

INTERVIEW WITH PARTICIPANT 4

Me: Hmm. Oh. Okay. Hi. How are you?

Participant 4: Can you hear me? I'm in the car.

Me: Oh, you're in the car? Oh my God, don't drive with the light on.

Participant 4: Okay.

Me: How are you?

Participant 4: Is it okay?

Me: It's totally fine. I just need to hear you. Yeah, so, , first of all, thank you so much for participating in this program. I know you have so much on your plate. Congratulations, by the way, on your upcoming wedding.

Participant 4: Thank you so much.

Me: So, we'll get right to it so I don't keep you too long. I've got, let's see, there's about 15 questions, but there are some sub-questions in here. So, can you tell me about your overall experience of participating in A Voice Becoming? What stood out most to you, or how did your experience change over the 2 weeks?

Participant 4: Yeah, so I completed — because I think there's 14 days, right? I read through all of that and then I did the activities for 7 or 8 days of it. And basically at the beginning, honestly, the affirmations and being nice to yourself and all that kind of stuff, it kind of felt weird at first. [THEME 3] I'm used to writing sad songs or using my music and stuff for just not well-being, I guess. [THEME 3] And so my overall experience is that I feel really encouraged, honestly, because I found a new, new way of using my talents and my creativity for something really good, I would say through this program. [THEME 3]

Me: Oh, that's amazing. Wow, thank you. That's so amazing.

Participant 4: Yeah.

Me: Okay, so, how did completing A Voice Becoming fit into your everyday life and the demands of being an independent singer-songwriter and a college student studying songwriting?

Participant 4: Good question. So I work 3 days a week, and so I would always do the program while I was at work. [THEME 1] And I sit at a desk, so whenever I got a free minute, I would usually go to the PDF, and I had a little notebook. [THEME 2] And so that's how I fit it into my schedule is when I had free time at work. [THEME 1] And so that ended up being a really good routine also because it worked out with my schedule [THEME 1] and also I got to do it at work and then also I would get to kind of ponder on it for the rest of the night, [THEME 2] do you what I mean?

Me: Yeah, no, that's great. , I specifically didn't tell people how to use this. I wanted people to figure out how it would fit into their life in the most comfortable way for them, right? But you answered another one of my questions, and that's, , how did you, how did you engage with it?

And, , you guys are 5 for 5. You all used pen to paper. I think that that's sort of the nature of being a writer and a songwriter and an artist, right?

Participant 4: Yeah.

Me: Okay, was there anything that made it feel easier to complete, or what made it easier to complete? What made it difficult?

Participant 4: Mm-hmm. Yeah. Oh yeah. I don't know. That's a hard one, I think. I think the exercises were well communicated, and I knew what I was supposed to be doing, [THEME 2]. It wasn't hard. I don't know, nothing, nothing was particularly difficult for me other than writing my own song with the affirmations. I'm my own biggest critic, [THEME 3] right? So, I wanted it to be good. And so those affirmations took me a while, actually. Honestly, I'm not—I am still working on it, [THEME 1] but that was just my own self. It had nothing to do with the, with A Voice Becoming. [THEME 3] So I think that was really good, and, and nothing about it was too difficult. I think it was easy, well communicated. So yeah.

Me: All right, cool. So, on the days that you didn't get to do it, what made it difficult? What got in the way?

Participant 4: Oh, gotcha. Well, honestly, just because the days that I don't work, I have class all day, and then I usually go to my fiancé's house, without my notebook. I keep my notebook in my work bag. And so that was usually why I didn't do it on those days. [THEME 1]

Me: Yeah. I get it. So that's me asking that question. I just want you to know that that's not a guilt trip. That's because your answer is important. That's data. That's so relevant and so valid. It's, I mean, you just, you told me you're going to school full-time, you work 3 days a week, you're getting married, you have a fiancé, and you're planning a wedding. I mean, and then I'm asking you to commit 30 minutes a day, to something for 2 weeks, which is a huge ask. But I'm really grateful that you spent some time with it. I mean, super grateful, I think you and [REDACTED] are the busiest out of everyone.

Participant 4: Okay, good. Yeah.

Participant 4: M-h. Yeah. Okay. Let's.

Participant 4: Yeah.

Me: Because you're both in school, because you, you have other things too, competing.

Participant 4: Mm-hmm. Yes, yes, ma'am.

Me: Yeah, okay, so, so that goes into this next question: how did you experience the amount, the amount of time and effort required by the program? Did you ever feel it was another task you had to complete? Were there days where it was easier or harder, and was there anything that felt unnecessarily demanding? So, how did you experience the amount of time and effort required by the program?

Participant 4: Oh no, I So, okay. If this is relevant to the season of life I'm in right now, because I have a huge to-do list, and so of course this was on my to-do list, so it, it did feel like a task in a

way, at first. But the thing that was kind of different about it is that every time that I did it, by the time I got to the end, I was really happy that I did it, and it wasn't I was doing a math assignment kind of thing. It had a very tangible, not tangible, but understandable benefit, I guess, if that makes sense.

Me: Yeah.

Participant 4: And so, I think that the amount of time that it took was okay. Honestly, it didn't really take me 30 minutes. It took me about 20 minutes-ish.

Me: That's what most people are saying, which makes me happy because I was worried that it was going to be an hour. Some people went over, but I was worried it was going to be long and I was worried about that because if it becomes so cumbersome that people can't complete it, that's not helpful, right?

Participant 4: Yeah. Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Me: What influenced whether you completed or didn't complete the practices on a particular day? Some of these are repetitive.

Participant 4: Yeah, again, just if I had work or not. And also, if work was really not busy, then I would spend more time on it and be more careful about how I completed the exercise, taking more time. If work was busy, then I maybe would try to get through it a little bit faster. So it really depended on how busy I was that day.

Me: Yeah. Yeah, I gotcha. Okay, fair enough. Were there particular practices within the program that you found yourself wanting to do or avoiding and putting off? Like, some people love the breathwork, some people didn't, that type of thing?

Participant 4: I, I was gonna say, as soon as you said that, I loved the breathwork actually. And it's because I recently went to counseling about 6 months ago. I had a couple sessions with the woman and she kind of taught me a little about, about breathwork and so I had some experience with it. [THEME 2] And then when I did it again, I was reminded of it because of this study. I was like, man, this actually really helps. It really regulates me whenever I'm feeling stressed, even when I don't even realize I'm feeling stressed. [THEME 2] And I do the box breathing a lot. I just feel so much better and also just so much more clear-minded and able to be nice to myself. So I am still doing that. [ALL THEME 2]

Me: I love that. That's, I mean, step one, right? And you just said it, step one, the reason we started with breathwork, is to self-regulate.

Participant 4: Yeah.

Me: Calm down, right? Find that quiet place.

Participant 4: Yeah. Yeah, it was great. Yeah.

Me: Right, yes, that's— that is what it was intended for. Amazing. And there's all this great research around it.

Participant 4: Mm-hmm.

Me: Okay, you'd do the breathwork. Was there anything that you found yourself not wanting to do and why?

Participant 4: No. Really not. I mean, the— again, I go back to the writing the sung affirmations. But that just had to do with myself and the pressure I put on myself, but then honestly, through writing the songs and through affirming myself, it became easier. So honestly, no.

Me: Yeah, okay, I love it, I love it. Okay, wonderful. All right, so thinking about the different components— breathwork, gratitude, self-compassion, some of the reflective prompts, and the sung affirmations— which practices felt most useful and meaningful to you?

Participant 4: Mm-hmm. I feel I keep saying the same thing, but the breathwork and the affirmations themselves were good. [THEME 2] Because I've, I don't know, I've never done that before. But also putting my own music to it was just really, that was super duper meaningful to me because of course, songwriting and music is my greatest passion. And so to, to put that To put my passion to work in that way was really meaningful to me, for sure. [THEME 3]

Me: Yeah. I love it. Okay, you are— you're acing the interview. No, this is great. Okay, so was there anything that felt less useful, uncomfortable, difficult, or irrelevant to you?

Participant 4: Nope.

Me: No. Okay. Was there anything that you would change or add or remove? Was there anything you'd do differently?

Participant 4: I don't know. The only, the only thing that I would think of would be for me to have had more time. Because I don't know, I might be remembering this wrong, but in the first day, are you supposed to write those song affirmations? the whole thing in the first day?

Me: So on the— yeah, you're supposed to do the whole thing on the first day, but the affirmation might just be “I am strong, I can do anything.” right? And that—it's just 2 lines and just set it to a melody and then sing it to yourself in the mirror. “I am strong, I can do anything,” It didn't need to be a full song until the very end. The very end, was write a full song if it moved you and if you wanted to write a song about your experience, maybe about how you've grown or, what you learned about yourself.

Participant 4: Oh, okay. Gotcha. Okay. Mm-hmm. Yeah, yeah, absolutely. I think Yeah, I think I was interpreting it wrong. [THEME 2] Also, I just wanted to write a whole chorus. And so I was, like man, this is gonna take me a little bit of time, but that makes total sense. So yeah, that all makes total sense.

Me: Yeah, so I mean, if going forward, see if you can engage with it in that way. “I am a queen,” and sing that to yourself.

Participant 4: Yeah. Right.

Me: Embody that and sing that to yourself in the mirror, because that's, that's your first step to believing it, right?

Participant 4: Mm-hmm.

Participant 4: Yes.

Me: What was your experience of using your singing voice? You touched a little bit on this already, but what was your experience of using your singing voice as part of a well-being practice rather than solely for performance or music making?

Participant 4: This is a good question. I think it impacted me really, really greatly. Because going back to “singing is my passion,” I think whenever I remember when I first understood that music was my passion, it was just for me, and over the years it has become so much about performing for other people, getting a good grade, and all of that stuff. [THEME 3] And so bringing it back to “I’m singing this song because I made it and it’s for me and it’s not for anyone else and no one’s judging it and I’m not performing it”. [THEME 3] that was really honestly, that was really special and really reminded me why I love it so much. [THEME 3]

Me: I love that so much. And that is the point. God, you guys are you're all brilliant. Seriously.

Participant 4: Yeah. Thank you so much.

Me: I'd say that the insights are just insane and you all just get it. I love it. Okay. All right. So in that vein, because, , part of this too, here I am getting this. , this master's degree, I'm a vocal coach, right? So it's , I'm not a psychologist, but I have— I work with this population of singer-songwriters who are struggling.

Participant 4: Yeah. Okay.

Participant 4: I just want to let you know that my phone is about to die, and so I'm so sorry.

Me: Oh no! No, no, you're okay.

Participant 4: You.

Me: Oh my gosh, thanks for coming back! Did you notice anything different in your relationship with your voice or your body during the 2 weeks?

Participant 4: I mean, yes, and, and what I said before about being able to better regulate my, my body with the breathing, [THEME 2] and my voice being kind of just mine again. [THEME 3]

Me: Okay, and did the sung affirmations feel different from simply thinking, speaking, or writing them?

Participant 4: Yes.

Me: If so, how? And I think you already answered that because it was more personal.

Participant 4: Definitely. Yes, meaningful.

Me: Okay, meaningful. Yeah. All right, so did you notice any changes in yourself, in yourself, during the 2 weeks that you associate with participating in A Voice Becoming? Anything related to managing stress or emotions, self-compassion, self-criticism, resilience, self-awareness, your

relationship with your singing voice, your confidence or identity as an artist, or making time for your own wellbeing?

Participant 4: Yes, I was reminded of the breathwork, which really helps me in stressful moments. [THEME 2]

Participant 4: I am just so sorry about that. Goodness gracious.

Me: Oh my God, you're fine, you're fine. I panicked.

Participant 4: But we got a charger, so we're good now.

Me: So, okay, so did you notice any changes in yourself during the— that you associate? Okay, so that's where we were. Did you notice any changes in yourself during the 2 weeks that you associate with participating in A Voice Becoming?

Participant 4: Yeah, I said at the beginning, it was weird to be so kind to myself, but through some of the days and the different exercises, it became— it started to feel more natural. And I did feel I was kinder to myself even in everyday situations, even when I wasn't doing the study, if that makes sense. [ALL THEME 2]

Me: Yeah. Yeah, no, that makes perfect sense. It is. It's kind of a muscle that we have to exercise in a strange way. That's the norm for some people. It wasn't the norm for me, but yeah, I think anything that we put our attention and awareness on, can grow.

Participant 4: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Me: Okay, did you Okay, I love that. So you noticed more self-compassion for yourself?

Participant 4: Yes.

Me: Okay, awesome.

Participant 4: That was a theme.

Me: Say that again?

Participant 4: I just said that was— that seemed to be a theme in the study.

Me: Yeah.

Participant 4: So.

Me: There's a whole researcher out there who's pioneered this work, and her name is Dr. Kristin Neff. She's Incredible.

Participant 4: Yes. Mm-hmm.

Me: Okay, so did A Voice Becoming feel specifically designed for someone like you, an independent female singer-songwriter? Why or why not?

Participant 4: It did. It definitely did. And I, I think it's because as a female singer-songwriter I just like being around other ones, too, but it is so easy for us to be hard on ourselves and be just so

mean to ourselves because the world is not nice to us, and the world puts a lot of pressure on us. [THEME 3] And, even just as a woman, it's easy to be my own biggest enemy, because I feel I need to impress people or be successful, [THEME 3] and so for that reason, the self-compassion and all of that was just really touching, [THEME 2] and also, its use of creativity really went along with what I do—I felt it meant something to me as a songwriter. [THEME 3] So yeah.

Me: I love that. Okay. Okay, so just tacking on to that last question, do you think that this could have been a general well-being program for anyone, or was there something about it that made it particularly relevant to artists or singer-songwriters?

Participant 4: I think I mean, I, I do think that it, in a lot of ways, in most ways, it could be a general well-being, because everyone has creativity that they can express. So I—and everyone could be nicer to themselves and everyone could learn a little bit about regulation and all of that. So I think sure, definitely. But I could definitely tell that the program was geared towards female songwriters. [ALL THEME 2]

Me: Okay, so now that the 2 weeks are over, are there any practices you expect to continue using? And why those?

Participant 4: Definitely the breathwork. Yeah, the self-compassion exercises, too, [THEME 2] and, I mean, honestly, just the mindset from it. The mindset that I, that I gained and grew into. [THEME 2] There's the program. Uh-huh. I'm regulating myself and just being nice to myself, even if I'm not singing the same affirmations every single day, I'm choosing to say kind things to myself. [THEME 3]

Me: I think it's huge. Okay, so if I offered A Voice Becoming to another group of independent female singer-songwriters, what would you tell me to keep, change, add, or remove about the program?

Participant 4: Am I allowed to say nothing? [THEME 2]

Me: Yeah, you can say nothing. Yeah.

Participant 4: I mean, yeah, I think I honestly don't see anything wrong with it. I think it was great. [THEME 2]

Me: Okay. All right. No, that's great. Thank you. Is there anything about your experience that I haven't asked about that you think would be important for me to know?

Participant 4: No, I think, I got to say everything that I wanted to say about it, so I think the interview was really good.

Me: All right, I have 2 more questions, but they're pretty quick. Okay, if you had to describe A Voice Becoming to another independent artist, what would you say?

Participant 4: Okay. I would say I would say— wait, can you say the question one more time? Sorry.

Me: Yeah, sure. If you had to describe the A Voice Becoming program to another independent artist, what would you say? How would you describe it?

Participant 4: I would say it's a program geared toward female singer-songwriters. And that it really helps aid in growth as a positive person and in gratefulness and in regulation for yourself and compassion for yourself. [THEME 2] Oh and bringing you back to kind of grounding you in your own creativity. [THEME 3]

Me: I love that.

Participant 4: Mm-hmm.

Me: Because that, that's right. Right. If we bring it back to our own creativity and use this regularly, we can become more self-aware and, perhaps as a result, more resilient.

Participant 4: Yes. Mm-hmm.

Me: We can become more authentic in our artistic identity, right?

Participant 4: Mm-hmm. Yes, yes, yes, yes.

Me: So even though it's today where we might be self-regulating, used over a long period of time, maybe it could have other positive effects...?

Participant 4: Yes.

Me: Okay, last one and we talked about this a little bit, but how did you use it? What time of day did you engage with it? So you said you did it at work during the day and then the last question, did you do it on a computer or in a notebook? Did you print it out or did you look on the computer and then write in the notebook?

Participant 4: I actually, I looked at it on my phone and then I would write in my notebook. [THEME 2]

Me: Okay, okay, yeah, all right. I had someone else who did it that too.

Participant 4: Yeah, so. Mm-hmm.

Me: All right. That's amazing.

Participant 4: Yay! Oh my gosh, thank you for, for letting me be a part of it.

Me: That's it. That's all there is.

Participant 4: It was so great.

Me: I can't thank you enough for taking part. When everything is done, I'll let you guys read the studies if you want.

Participant 4: Yeah. I would love to.

Me: All right, honey, well, listen, drive safely and thank you, thank you, thank you so much for everything.

Participant 4: Yeah. Yes, ma'am, of course. I hope you have a great night.

Me: Thank you. You too.

Participant 4: Bye.

Me: All right, bye.

###

INTERVIEW WITH PARTICIPANT 5

Interviewer: Um, first off, thank you so much for agreeing to do this. It... I know it was a huge ask.

Participant 5: Of course.

Interviewer: Tell me about your overall experience of completing a Voice Becoming. What stood out the most to you? Did your experience change over the two weeks? What did you... what did you think?

Participant 5: Yeah, yeah. Um, well, I'll just start off by saying I loved it, and I think for me, the reason why I loved it is because... a lot of these practices I've done before in therapy and self-development stuff that I've done, but I felt like it was a very succinct way of intentionally, like, starting my day with these things was... so helpful, and it's something that I didn't realize how powerful it would be until I finished it, and I'm like, wait, I need to continue doing this. [ALL THEME 2] Um...it's definitely something that I want to continue, and I found that on the mornings, or on the days when I wasn't able to complete it in the morning, I found it harder to complete it throughout the day. [THEME 1] Like, if I... didn't do it in the morning, and I did it, like, in the afternoon or evening, I found that it was really hard for me to not let my brain and my thoughts, like, affect the way that I answer questions, which that was really interesting. Um, so I definitely think it's something that was extremely powerful, but especially in the morning and, like, starting my day. [THEME 2] Uh...

Interviewer: Did it help you set the day ahead?

Participant 5: Totally. 100%. Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, that's so interesting because it's so funny when I was like, I don't know why, and there's no right or wrong, like, and I did not tell anybody this. Use it how you want to use it and use it in a way that's most helpful to you. Alright, so, how did completing A Voice Becoming fit into your everyday life and the demands of being an independent singer-songwriter?

Participant 5: for me, again, it was something that I definitely prioritized first thing in the morning, [THEME1] and I found that it took the place of doom scrolling on my phone, which is my own negative habit that I have. [THEME 2]

Interviewer: Ooh, love that.

Participant 5: But I think for me, I noticed that when I did fit it into my life, especially in the morning, [THEME1] I was able to go into my sessions and into my day-to-day life feeling so much more confident and at peace with what I felt inside that it was easy for me to verbalize it to other people. [THEME 2]Um...

Interviewer: That's amazing. Hang on, I forgot to record this on my phone. Hold on a second.

Participant 5: Very good.

Interviewer: Because I've got to, like, attach all this to the end. Like, this thing's going to be 500 pages, I'm telling you, just because of the transcripts and everything.

Interviewer: Okay, so, so say that again. So, so you found it when you did it in the morning. Okay, wait, how did it fit? Yeah.

Participant 5: It took...the place of, like, the negative doom-scrolling cycle. Like, it kind of helped me break that cycle, where, like, I knew the first thing that I did in the morning was, like, this program. [THEME 2] Because I wanted... I wanted to do it, and I knew that it was something that...was helpful if I didn't have my brain, like, racing with things that I found on my phone. Like, if I could just go into it with, like, a clear brain and a clear mind in the morning, that's when, for me, it felt the most impactful.

Interviewer: Okay, I love that. Was there anything that made it easier to complete? Was there anything that made it more difficult? How did work, gigs, rehearsals, songwriting, social media, family life, and other responsibilities affect you? Affect participation.

Participant 5: That's a good question. Um...I think I planned ahead and, like, knew the days where, like, I had to be somewhere at a specific time, where I made sure to, like, wake up a little bit earlier so I could fit it in. [THEME 1]

Interviewer: You fit it in. Yeah.

Participant 5: in the morning, because I wanted to, that I... on the days when I wasn't able to do it right in the morning. I found that it was definitely harder to have my brain stick to, like, the prompts or, like, the breathing exercises without getting distracted, thinking about, like, things that I had going on, or like, oh, after this, I need to, like, send that email, or, like, go to this thing.... [THEME 1] Um, whereas right in the morning, like, I had nothing else to do, so it's like, I might as well just do it. [THEME 1]

Interviewer: I love that because it's like you wake up and you're like, I'm doing this. Yeah.

Participant 5: Yes. Yes.

Interviewer: I love that. That's so good. Okay. So how did you experience the amount of time and effort required by the program? Did it feel like it was too much? Was it too little? Did it ever feel like just another task you had to complete? Were there days where it felt easier or harder? Was there anything that felt unnecessarily demanding?

Participant 5: Yeah. Mmhm. I wouldn't say anything was, like, overkill, in my opinion. Like, I felt like...before going into the program, I thought that every aspect of it would be every single day, like a breathwork, a journaling, gratitude, like, I thought it was all gonna be everything, every single day, but I almost liked that it wasn't that, because it helped me to, like, have variety and switch it up. [THEME 2] and really feel like, okay, today I just have to do breathwork and gratitude, so I could give my all into that, rather than feel super overwhelmed by everything. Um...something that I found was difficult, and it was more difficult for myself and my brain, was the self-compassion stuff of, like.

Participant 5: Pivoting my brain from the negative self-talk into, like, a positive...reframe. That was, like, challenging, but, like, a good challenging, and, like, a necessary thing. And how often, like, especially as women, that we are negative to ourselves. Like, I think...being able to recognize that from this program was, like, eye-opening for me to realize, like, how often I was speaking to myself in a negative way. [THEME 2]

Interviewer: And we think, like, oh, we're in control of it, you know, but...But are we? Okay. Um, what influenced whether you completed or didn't complete the practices on a particular day?

Participant 5: Mmm. I...definitely completed everything, but I would say, in terms of, like, what time of day, it was definitely, like, making the time for it. Like, did I prepare ahead of time to carve out the time? Like, did I set my alarm earlier to, like, give myself 20 to 30 more minutes. [THEME 1] Or, like, do I have to carve out that time in the afternoon? I don't know what to say. Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, um, were there particular practices that you found yourself wanting to do, or avoiding or putting off and why?

Participant 5: Hmm. Definitely the ones that were enjoyable for me that I have always really found powerful have been breathwork. Um, I think because I'm a yoga teacher and I did a yoga training, [THEME 2] that was a huge part of my education about it, was, like, the power of breath and, like how it really can help move energy throughout the body, that... that is something that I've already been doing for so long that it just came so easy... so easily to me. [THEME 2] Um...I think also to something that was definitely. Are you saying both positive and negative?

Interviewer: Yeah, positive and negative.

Participant 5: I think like, doing the gratitude exercises, like, I realize that that's not something that I do a lot of, and I don't know why. I think it's because I'm constantly...wanting more and more and, like, wanting to push myself to, like, get more and more and achieve more. [THEME 3] that, like, I don't ever stop to, like, appreciate a lot of things. [THEME 3] And the people and the types of activities that I do in my daily life, that that was really cool, too, and I looked forward to it. Um...And one that I learned to like, it was definitely uncomfortable at first, was the sung affirmation stuff.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay.

Participant 5: at first, it was uncomfortable, and it's something that I've, like, never done before, [THEME 3] and I was like, wait, this is different, but I learned to really like it. [THEME 2] and I thought it was really, really fun. Yeah, and having it, like, be something, like, confidently sung, and being like, no, I'm owning this, like, because our voices are so powerful. [THEME 3]

Interviewer: Right.

Participant 5: it's just, it's such a unique way of expressing it, so I thought that was really cool.

Interviewer: Um, okay, so thinking about the different components, breathwork, gratitude, self-compassion, when it says reflection, what I mean is, um...the reflective prompts, like, and the sung affirmations, which practices felt most useful and meaningful to you, and then what felt less useful or uncomfortable or difficult?

Participant 5: Totally.

Interviewer: So, I think we just talked about it, but...

Participant 5: Yeah, I can repeat it. Definitely loved the breath work. I felt like the gratitude stuff was so helpful again. And I think the more difficult part for me was the self-compassion [THEME 2] and giving myself. Being honest with myself, instead of, like...lying and being like, oh, no, I

never think that way, of like, no, like, there are moments where I do think really negatively about myself, and like, how can I pivot those thoughts and have a more productive way of thinking? Um, so I think as the program went on, I became more confident and, like, more comfortable asking myself those questions and, like, pivoting my thoughts. [THEME 2] Um, and I... as I said before, like, the sung affirmations were something that were really uncomfortable at first, [THEME 2] but as I got more into the program, it was something that I actually really, really liked. [THEME 2]

Interviewer: Thank you. Was there anything about the program that you would remove, change, or add?

Participant 5: Mmm. I think something that I feel that this program, um...could be is just longer. Like, I think...more of, like, okay, you learn all these things now, like, we can keep going, like... but I think that's definitely, like, a more self...it's more of, like, a self-practice thing, where, like, now I want to take a lot of these things and just keep going with them. [THEME 2] Um, I feel that the format of it and, like, the length of everything throughout each day was perfect.[THEME 2] Like, it really did not take that much time. [THEME 1]

Interviewer: Good, thank you.

Participant 5: And I think that's what I really liked about it, and um...have more thoughts on that, but I don't... yeah, I wanted to make...

Interviewer: No, no, I want to hear them all, because the other thing is, you know, here I was, I sent this file to everyone, and I never told anybody how to use it, like, did you use it, did you write in a notebook, did you do it on the computer, how did you use it?

Participant 5: I wrote it in a notebook,[THEME 1] and I think for me, I spend so much time on a screen that I was like, I want this to be, like, the thing that I don't have be on my phone or computer. [THEME 2] And I think something that I like about this program. When comparing it, even though it's not, like, neck and neck with it, but is similar to, like, the artist way. I have found that the artist way for me is like a little bit too daunting and like having to commit almost an hour of time per day to like write the three pages and like do all the artist dates for me was just a lot. [THEME 1]

Interviewer: Right.

Participant 5: Where it... this program was kind of, like, succinct all of that into something that felt a little bit more accessible.[THEME 1]

Interviewer: Okay. What was your experience of using your singing voice as part of a well-being practice rather than solely for performance or music making? Um, yeah, so how did... did... how did you feel about using your voice in the exercises?

Participant 5: I thought it was really unique because it's something that I've never done before outside of, like, writing my music or, like, singing a song, where it made me feel... like, I think when I sing in general, it makes me feel in control of myself and, like powerful, that using that same instrument that I use when I feel those things, like, really helped me to feel that while singing affirmations.[THEME 3] Like, it helped me to channel that feeling that I have when I'm performing or singing, [THEME 3] which I thought was really cool.

Interviewer: I love that, and that's amazing. Okay, and did you notice anything different in your relationship with your voice or your body during the two weeks?

Participant 5: Yes. Mmm, definitely, like, I think... Again, like, using and having the exercises as a tool to, like, reframe a lot of, like, negative self...thoughts was so helpful for me to now have the tools and, like, gain the tools and knowledge to pivot those thoughts, that, like, I was able to appreciate who I am and, like, how I want to show up as an artist, [THEME 3] in a cool way. Um, and that's definitely something that I want to continue, [THEME 2] because I can definitely tell that, like, how I approach singing now and, like, approach just living in general and, like, being a woman is, like, different now, [THEME 3] because I've...I went through those self-compassion exercises and, yeah, and worked through those things, which is cool.

Interviewer: Like, if we don't... if you wouldn't say it to your best friend, or your sister, you know?

Participant 5: Totally, it's like, why say it to yourself? Yeah.

Interviewer: Um, okay, did the sung affirmations feel different from simply thinking, speaking, or writing an affirmation? If so, how?

Participant 5: Yes, and I think in the past, I'd never, like...said them out loud, like, I've always just written them in journals, where actually, like, singing them and, like, speaking them into existence made them feel more real [THEME 3], whereas just reading them off a paper, while it's still empowering, it's not quite the same. [THEME 3] Like, I think it's just something that, like, you have written down, and you're like, okay, that's on a piece of paper, it's like, can just close it, and it's gone. But, like, singing them made them feel actually more...real, [THEME 3] which is cool. Yeah. Yes.

Interviewer: That makes me so happy. I have like goosebumps. Okay, did you notice any changes in yourself during the two weeks that you associate with participating in A Voice Becoming?

Participant 5: Yes! I think something that I noticed was like how much I do value time dedicated to myself in the morning, [THEME 1] like intentional time where I'm doing things to better myself, whether that be journaling, breath work, singing the affirmations, [THEME 2] instead of just like waking up and immediately going on my phone and disconnecting from myself. [THEME 1] Where I learned that, like, I'm someone that actually needs to take a second in my day to, like, connect with myself in order to show up in a better way. [THEME 2]

Interviewer: you know, and I... not to put words in your mouth, but... it's like, okay, if I have a greater grasp of this, and the self-awareness, and the resilience, then, you know, over time, are we not creating more authenticity for you to show up and just be the most you in your music, right?

Participant 5: Totally, yeah, absolutely.

Interviewer: Um, okay, so... um...Were there any areas where you noticed little or no change?

Participant 5: I wouldn't say so. Like, I think all of it was really positive. [THEME 2]

Interviewer: Yay! Okay, did you feel like a voice becoming... did it feel specifically designed for someone like you, an independent female singer-songwriter? Why or why not?

Participant 5: Yes. Absolutely, and I think... Some of the prompts hinted at that, but it wasn't, overly to the point where it was all about music [THEME 2]. Like, it was more about, like, who am I as

a person? [THEME 3] But I think having us sing the affirmations really helped to connect to the reason why I love singing and, being in music is to use my voice. [THEME 3] That...it was so much deeper than about being a musician and a female singer-songwriter. It was more about, like, how do I show up as the best version of myself, and, like, know myself more than... separate from...P5 the artist [REDACTED], or P5 the songwriter [REDACTED]. [THEME 3]

Interviewer: Yeah. Well, you know, that's so funny. I mean, that is a huge thing that comes up for women more than men. It's like separating out your artist [REDACTED] from [REDACTED] the Person, right? Some of the findings in the research are women struggle with that more than men do.

Participant 5: Yeah. And I think social media doesn't help it either, of, like, everyone assumes that how you present yourself on social media is who you are 100% of the time, and I think that's something I've struggled with a lot, is, like, how can I make social media feel like me when I don't want it to be this, like, glamorized version of myself, which everyone expects it to be. [THEME 3]

Interviewer: Do you think this could have been a general well-being program for anyone, or was there something about it that made it particularly relevant to artists or singer-songwriters?

Participant 5: Mm-hmm. That's a really good question. I think this is totally something that should be used in...colleges. [THEME 2] Like, I think especially at Belmont, this is something that I feel is necessary, and is not something that is talked about enough. Where I think, like, professors and being in college, they just assume that you figure it out on your own. [THEME 2] And I don't think there's ever a space where you can, like figure yourself out as a person, [THEME 3] they just, like, expect you to know who you are. And I think this could go so well with...a songwriting degree, or with a music business degree, [THEME 2] because I think that that's something that is necessary and important. I think the only thing that would make it uncomfortable for people is the singing, if they're not a singer. But I think, like, singing is fun, and, like, everybody does it, even if they're not professional. Like, people sing in the shower, and karaoke.

Interviewer: I agree. Yep, yep.

Participant 5: Yes! And it's so smart, because I think music, whether or not it's somebody's profession, like, is a huge part of everybody's lives [THEME 2], whether people recognize it or not, that I think it's something that will help a lot of people, and I think especially college students, because there's a pressure to, like, graduate and then be independent and know what you want to do and know who you are. And not a lot of people ask themselves those questions. [THEME 2]

Interviewer: Yeah, thank you.

Participant 5: And I think, especially in, like, high school, too, like, I think it could be even something that high schoolers could use [THEME 2] to, like, figure out, okay, what do I want to do with my life? Like, do I want to go to college? Do I want to become an engineer like everyone wants me to be? Or, like...Do I do something different? Yeah. And some people need that framework to, like, help them ask those sorts of questions. [THEME 2] Like, not everyone goes to therapy and, like, has someone helping you figure that out. Yeah.

Interviewer: Um, now that the two weeks are over, are there any...practices you expect to continue using.

Participant 5: Honestly, most of them. [THEME 2] Like, I think, for me, even if it's not, like, as structured as this. [THEME 2] I definitely, even though I said this before, like I definitely know that I need to prioritize something in the morning that's checking in with myself [THEME 1], and whether that be the self-compassion exercises, or journaling, or breathwork, or all of those at the same time [THEME 2], it's definitely something that I know I need to prioritize, and sets me up to be more confident in my skin and, like, feeling more positive about myself and how I want to show up.

Interviewer: Isn't it amazing, though, too, like, when you're really engaged with something like that, and it's almost like it's a muscle, it's a mindset, and when you're in it, like, it's just like, when I'm in it, I feel so strong, and then when I, like, let it lapse. Because I've had a lifetime of negative thoughts, you know what I mean? Like, so...

Participant 5: Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay if I offered this... did I already ask this one? If I offered a voice becoming to another group of independent female singer-songwriters, what would you tell me to keep, change, add, or remove?

Participant 5: I mean, I think keep all of it. I don't really feel like anything needs to change, honestly. I would be interested to see, um... how this would develop in, like, a group setting, too, with, like, discussion and, like, collaboration [THEME 2] in a way, like, I think that would be interesting to, like, talk to people who are also doing the program [THEME 2] to, like, hear what things... like, I'm also just a very curious person, and, like, find that stuff fun, but I think it'd be cool to, like, discuss it with people, um, which is why I think it'd be so great for, like, a classroom setting, or, like a publishing company to, like, have their writers do this [THEME 2]. Like, I think it's just something that should be a part of, like, discussion. Um...

Interviewer: Do you think a publishing company would have their writers do this?

Participant 5: I would hope so. I would... I personally feel like, why wouldn't they? Because you would want... you would think and hope that they would want writers and people who are, like, confident in what they want to say and what they want to do [THEME 3]. But I think, unfortunately, now all the publishers care about is making money [THEME 3]. At the end of the day, which is, like, the business, that I think they're more like, it doesn't matter what you want, it's what we think you want. And so... I don't know. I would hope that publishers would want to do this, because I think it would teach them a lot about themselves, too, as publishers, and, like, how they show up for their artists and people that they work with.

Interviewer: Right.

Participant 5: Yep.

Interviewer: No, that's really interesting. I mean, like, 'cause I'm... I'm thinking about something you said, too. I'm thinking about all of this. I'm thinking about, you know, how... I'd like to put this out in the world. I'm trying to think about how I would do that, right?

Participant 5: Totally. I think would be so helpful.

Interviewer: I mean, I would love to teach this class at Belmont, you know, like, love to.

Participant 5: There's a class, not to keep getting on tangents for the transcription, but two things. One, the yoga studio that I go to, Shakti, um, they do a six-week artist way group program where they meet once a week and discuss it [THEME 2]. Where I feel like this could be something too where like bi-weekly or like weekly you meet once just to like talk about things with the program, [THEME 2] I think could be cool. Also too, I did take an artist development class at Belmont and I'm happy to share more details later, too, but I think, for me, something that I felt was very much missing, and a lot of my peers agreed, was, like, the actual self-artist development thing [THEME 3], where I felt like that was so... it was completely missing from the course. And...I feel like a lot of people left feeling very unfulfilled from that class, and more confused, so I feel like there's a lot...like, a ton of room, yeah. It's something that I feel like was 100% missing from my program. [THEME 2]

Interviewer: Okay, I love that. Well, I don't love that, but you know what I mean. Okay, is there anything about your experience that I haven't asked about that you think it's important for me to know?

Participant 5: I don't think so.

Interviewer: Okay, final question. If you had to describe a voice becoming to another independent artist, what would you say?

Participant 5: I would say a voice becoming is a two-week intensive... self-guided program [THEME 2] that teaches you... the tools that you [THEME 2] need to set yourself up to dive deeper into who you are as an artist and a person. [THEME 3] And it gives you the tools that you need to positively think about your career and your life. [THEME 3]

Interviewer: Okay, alright, that was amazing. Alright, so, I'm gonna go ahead and stop the recording.

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Appendix 11: Consolidated Interview Coding

Theme 1: The Tension Between Intention and Capacity

Theme 2: Supporting Engagement with an Integrated Intervention

Theme 3: Reclaiming Creative Practices for Personal Well-Being

Code/Category	Participant Evidence	Interpretation	Final Theme
Feasibility Mental Capacity	P3: "It came down to my mental capacity that day. I definitely had the time."	Available time did not necessarily translate into the capacity to complete the exercises	Theme 1
Feasibility Daily routines and competing responsibilities	P1: "I was on vacation for half of it, so that made it easier."	Fewer competing responsibilities appeared to support program completion.	Theme 1
Feasibility Timing and routine	P5: "on the days when I wasn't able to complete it in the morning, I found it harder to complete it throughout the day."	Completing the exercises in the morning helped P5 establish a workable routine.	Themes 1 & 2
Acceptability Artist-specific relevance	P2: "it's refreshing that there's something that has to do with being a female songwriter that's not just for the sake of success"	The artist-specific focus contributed to the program's perceived relevance.	Theme 3
Acceptability Approachability	P2: "it felt approachable"	The participant perceived the program as accessible and manageable in its presentation.	Theme 2
Acceptability Enjoyment and Engagement	P4: "I really looked forward to it each day, it was something good that I was doing for myself."	The program was experienced as enjoyable and engaging, even when participants faced challenges with completion.	Theme 2
Perceived Effectiveness Self-care and emotional regulation	P2: "as my stress increased, I kind of let things like self-care go"	Participant described difficulty in maintaining self-care during stressful periods, highlighting a challenge the intervention sought to address. This does not establish improvement.	Theme 1
Perceived Effectiveness Creative expression	P4: "I've been really enjoying singing again, just for myself rather than to make something out of it."	The program supported a reconnection with creative practices for personal well-being rather than professional outcomes.	Theme 3

Perceived Effectiveness Positive mindset	P5: "I noticed I was a bit kinder to myself and less critical"	The participant perceived increased self-kindness and a more positive mindset as a result of the program.	Theme 3
Barriers and Refinements Need for clearer guidance	P1: "I would probably give examples of sung affirmations."	Providing examples could help participants understand and complete the sung affirmation exercises.	Theme 2
Barriers and Refinements Performance expectations	P4: "I think I was interpreting it wrong. Also, I just wanted to write a whole chorus."	The exercise appeared to prompt songwriting expectations rather than purely personal well-being practice, suggesting a need for clearer instructions.	Theme 2
Barriers and Refinements Flexibility and adaptation	P3: "If there had been an audio guide, I probably would have been more consistent"	Audio guidance and greater flexibility in delivery may support engagement and improve adherence.	Theme 2

Appendix 12: Development of Final Themes

Final Theme	Contributing Codes	Supporting Evidence and Patterns	Analytic Interpretation
Theme 1: The Tension Between Intention and Capacity	Mental capacity; competing responsibilities; daily routines; challenges maintaining self-care	P3 reported having sufficient time but lacking mental capacity (fatigue); P1 found completion easier while on vacation; P5 found morning completion for manageable and made time for it by waking earlier; P2 described how increasing stress disrupted self care; P4 reported looking forward to the program but completed only 8 of 14 days due to school, work and wedding preparations – she found it easier to complete exercises during quiet time at work than on days outside the office.	Participants' willingness to engage did not always translate into consistent participation. Feasibility depended on emotional capacity, existing routines, and competing demands rather than time availability alone.
Theme 2: Supporting Engagement with an Integrated Intervention	Enjoyment and engagement; approachability; clearer guidance; performance expectations; flexibility and adaptation	P4 looked forward to the activities despite incompleting adherence; P2 described the program as approachable when she could make time but only completed 5 days; P1 requested examples of sung affirmations and found the PDF inconvenient to navigate; P3 suggest audio guidance; P4 looked forward to the activities but described uncertainty about the sung affirmation exercise; P5 appreciated the variety of practices and established a morning routine to support participation by waking earlier.	The integrated format was generally well-received, but engagement could be strengthened through clearer instructions, guided resources, and flexible delivery. Enjoyment and acceptability did not necessarily guarantee adherence.

Theme 3: Reclaiming Creative Practices for Personal Well-Being	Artist-specific relevance; creative expression; self-compassion; positive mindset; personal rather than professional creative practice	P1 initially experienced discomfort with sung affirmations but became more comfortable through continued participation, suggesting that melody familiarity could help make singing a personal reflective practice easier to complete; P2 appreciated the program addressed female songwriters' well-being rather than focusing exclusively on professional achievement, calling it "refreshing"; P3 found spoken affirmations more natural than sung affirmations, demonstrating that using the voice for personal well-being was not equally comfortable for every participant; P4 Initially approached sung affirmations with songwriting expectations but later realized that she could sing something created for herself without judgement or performance pressure; P5 appreciated opportunities to explore her identity beyond her professional role and connected sung affirmations to her love of singing rather than performance.	Participants described opportunities to reconnect with creativity as a personal well-being practice rather than a professional obligation. Reported improvements in self-kindness and creative enjoyment suggest perceived benefits, although effectiveness cannot be established from this feasibility study.
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