

**MUSIC EDUCATORS' LIVED EXPERIENCES WITH TEACHER-DIRECTED  
VIOLENCE IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR**

By © Rosemary C. Lawton A thesis submitted to the  
School of Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

**Master of Education**

**Faculty of Education**

Memorial University of Newfoundland

**June 2023**

St. John's Newfoundland and Labrador

# VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

## **Abstract**

Violence directed against educators is becoming a growing phenomenon in K-12 school systems across the globe. While numerous studies on violence against classroom educators exist, after extensive research, I have not discovered any studies that focus on music educators. This present study explores the shared experiences of classroom music educators in Newfoundland and Labrador who have been victims of violence in their classrooms. Through the implementation of a survey with 49 participants and a focus group with four participants, this study analyzes the risk of violence toward music educators, explores the potential causes of violence against music educators, and offers possible solutions that can help mitigate or prevent the risk for future incidents of violence. This study invites policymakers, administrators, and music educators to re-evaluate their current practices.

# VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

## **General Summary**

While schools are meant to be environments of learning, there are systemic issues that can place teachers at risk for violence. While research has been done that focuses on violence against teachers, there are currently no studies to my knowledge that focus directly on classroom music. In this study, I explored what potential causes of violence exist against music educators, and what could help prevent or mitigate violent incidents in the future. This study included a survey of 49 participants offered to classroom music educators in Newfoundland and Labrador, with a subsequent focus group of four survey respondents who volunteered to participate. Data showed that music educators work within specific scenarios that can create risks for teacher-directed violence, and participants provided numerous valuable suggestions for how to improve the situation in future.

**Acknowledgements**

I am incredibly grateful to the support that I received throughout this process from my professor Dr. David Buley. His unending support and expertise guided me through this journey. This research would not have been possible without the participation of so many strong and resilient music educators who were open to sharing their stories. I would also be remiss if I did not mention my parents and my partner for constantly encouraging and motivating me to do my best.

# VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

## Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
General Summary .....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
List of Figures.....	viii
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
1.1 The Phenomenon .....	1
1.2 Research Question and Method .....	4
1.3 My Story – An Auto-Ethnographic Approach.....	5
1.4 The Population.....	8
1.6 Significance of the Study .....	9
1.7 Overview of the Study .....	10
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	12
2.1 Introduction.....	12
2.2 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).....	12
2.3 Defining Violence.....	14
2.4 Prevalence of Teacher-Directed Violence .....	14
2.5 Psychological Effects of Victimization .....	15
2.6 Causes of Student Violence Against Teachers .....	16
2.7 Risk Factors in a Music Education Setting.....	17
2.8 Solutions in the Classroom .....	18
2.9 Solutions in the Music Classroom .....	21
2.10 Gaps and Limitations .....	21
2.11 Summary.....	22
Chapter 3: Methodology.....	23
3.1 The Rationale for Research Design .....	24
3.2 Sampling and Participants.....	25
3.3 Data Collection Methods .....	26
3.4 Data Analysis .....	28
3.4.1 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis .....	28
3.5 Role of the Researcher .....	29
3.6 Ethical Considerations .....	30
3.7 Limitations of Study .....	32

# VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

Chapter 4: Articulating the Experience .....	34
4.1 Phase 1: Quantitative Results.....	35
4.2 Phase 2: Qualitative Results.....	41
4.2.1 The Experience of Violence Against Music Educators .....	41
4.2.1.1 Types of Violence. ....	41
4.2.1.2 Incident Reporting. ....	46
4.2.1.3 Incident Analysis. ....	48
4.2.2 The Aftermath of Violence Against Music Educators.....	52
4.2.2.1 Emotional Responses.....	52
4.2.2.2 Mental Health.....	53
4.2.2.3 Passion, Desensitization, and Thoughts of Leaving the Profession.....	56
4.2.3 Music Educators' Perceived Support Following a Violent Incident. ....	57
4.2.3.1 Classroom Support.....	58
4.2.3.2 Administrator Support. ....	60
4.2.3.3 Community Support.....	61
4.2.3.4 School Support.....	63
4.2.3.5 Respect.....	64
4.2.4 The Prevention of Violence Against Music Educators.....	67
4.2.4.1 Classroom Layout. ....	67
4.2.4.2 Teacher Training.....	70
4.2.4.3 Summary.....	74
Chapter 5: Discussion .....	75
5.1 Summary of findings.....	75
5.2 Phase One: Quantitative Data .....	76
5.3 Phase Two: Qualitative Data .....	77
5.3.1 Reflections on Themes.....	77
5.3.1.1 The experience of violence against music educators.....	77
5.3.1.2 The aftermath of violence against music educators.....	80
5.3.1.3 Music Educators' perceived support following a violent incident. ....	84
5.3.1.4 The prevention of violence against music educators.....	88
5.4 Reflection on Methodology .....	91
5.5 Participant Selection Process .....	91
5.6 Focus Group.....	92

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

5.7 Data Analysis .....	92
Chapter 6: Summary, Introspections, and Implications.....	94
6.1 Summary .....	94
6.2 Implications.....	95
6.2.1 Policy Makers .....	95
6.2.2 Administrators.....	96
6.2.3 Music Educators.....	97
6.2.4 For Further Study.....	97
6.2.5 Summary .....	98
6.3 Introspection .....	101
References.....	105
Appendix A: Letter of Consent for Focus Group .....	111
Appendix B: Letter of Consent for Survey.....	116
Appendix C: Survey Questions.....	120
Appendix D: Focus Group Script/Guide .....	128
Appendix E: Ethics Approval Letter .....	129

**List of Figures**

Figure 4.1 Regional Demographics of Survey Participants (Percentage of participants)..... 37  
Figure 4.2 Teacher Training Demographics (Number of Participants) ..... 37  
Figure 4.3 Music Education Subject Area (Percentage of participants)..... 38  
Figure 4.4 Participant Experiences with Victimization ..... 40  
Figure 4.5 Types of Violence Experienced (Number of participants)..... 40

## Chapter 1: Introduction

In this thesis, I reported a phenomenological study that explored music educators' experiences with teacher-directed violence in the classroom. Unlike other studies that have analyzed violence against teachers, this study focused solely on music educators. I based the study on the perceptions of music educators in classroom K-12 education settings, whose experiences were presented through a survey (see Appendix C) and follow-up focus group discussion (see Appendix D). The study took place in Newfoundland and Labrador, where music educators from across the province could participate virtually through the completion of an online survey and a focus group held through Webex<sup>1</sup>. The music educators were asked to reflect upon their most notable experiences with violence, discuss why they thought the incidents occurred, and suggest ideas on how the school system in Newfoundland and Labrador could improve and contribute to preventing further incidents of violence.

Analyzing music educators' collective experiences with teacher-directed violence could better equip educational professionals to address the phenomenon in the future. The interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) methodology was used as a way of exploring the shared experiences of the selected group of music educators. Within this methodology, I invited music educators to explore and reflect upon their own experiences and to examine how circumstances could be improved.

### 1.1 The Phenomenon

Violence in the classroom is a serious issue in schools, and while the focus is on protecting children from potential victimization, very little research focuses on violence against

---

<sup>1</sup> Bryant, S. (2023). Webex [Computer Software]. Cisco Systems. Retrieved from <https://www.webex.com/> : A secure online video calling platform

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

teachers, leading to a significant lack of support for teachers in school systems when faced with violent situations. Educators report high numbers of annual assaults, harassment, and threats, and often they do not get adequately addressed, leaving teachers feeling unsafe and exhausted (McMahon et al., 2014). While it is paramount that educators be protected, one must first look at the prevalence of teacher-directed violence and underlying issues that could lead to violence in the classroom.

McMahon et al. (2014) conducted a detailed study on the prevalence of violence against teachers, the types of violence experienced, and the types of perpetrators. While one might assume that only students might perpetrate violence against teachers, McMahon et al. reveal that a smaller but significant percentage of the perpetrators are parents and colleagues. Some types of violence against teachers identified by McMahon et al. are physical violence resulting in seeking medical aid; physical violence that does not require medical assistance; threats with a weapon; theft or property damage; and harassment (McMahon et al.). Patchin and Hinduja (2011) state that violence can present as physical (fights) or emotional (for example, cyberbullying and verbal assault). According to Cullen et al. (2008), Moon et al. (2012), and Patchin and Hinduja (2011), females are less likely to be victims of physically violent acts. However, that does not exclude them from other forms of violence in schools, including non-physical violence. Within their study, 80% of teachers were victims of at least one form of violence, which is a staggering statistic that justifies the need for more research in this area (McMahon et al., 2014).

Agnich and Miyazaki (2013) take a unique approach to collecting school violence data. Because of the prominence of violence globally, Agnich and Miyazaki use a global survey reported by principals internationally to see the presence of violence in schools. Interestingly, they discovered that western records of school violence are much higher than in non-western

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

countries (Agnich and Miyazaki, 2013). Viewing these statistics at face value may suggest that there is indeed less violence in non-western schools. The authors intuitively consider that violence may be viewed or defined differently in different cultures and may not be reported in the same way as in western countries (Agnich and Miyazaki). It would be interesting to see what teacher safety looks like in schools internationally.

Comparatively, Moon et al. (2012) discuss violence in a South Korean context and conclude that there are significant cultural differences. They state that South Korea might have a lower rate of physical violence due to the high expectations of parents for students to achieve in school, placing different strains on students than in western cultures (Moon et al., 2012). Moon et al. (2012) identify isolation as the primary form of school violence in South Korea. An entire class could decide to reject one classmate, and that classmate could be a victim of loneliness and ridicule.

School systems function differently in every country, and while Canada and the United States are both in North America, some differences justify a more detailed study. While work has been done internationally to study teacher-directed violence, very little research on violence against educators has been conducted within Canada, with most of the research in North America occurring in the United States.

Music Educators have a specific job in the school system that could place them in a unique position for the risk of violence. As specialized teachers in a non-core subject, music educators can find themselves in isolated situations with varied support from administrators, staff, and community members. With a lack of support, music educators may be at a heightened risk for teacher-directed violence in the classroom.

# VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

## 1.2 Research Question and Method

The research question for this study was: what are classroom music educators' experiences of violence, and how can school systems change to help prevent or mitigate future incidents? This study used a mixed-methods approach. The study's first phase was a survey where I collected quantitative data and asked open-ended qualitative questions. The study's second phase was a focus group. The qualitative portions of the survey and the focus group were analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). IPA allowed the researcher to focus on the shared experiences of a group of people and explore how individuals interpreted their own experiences, which accurately fits the research needs of this study (Smith, 2011). I asked a smaller selection of music educators who had experienced teacher-directed violence to speak more in-depth about their experiences in a focus group.

Not everyone understands their experiences in the same way. In the context of violence against music educators, some educators may perceive their experience as more or less severe, and the incident may have a different level of impact on each person's life. As a researcher and educator who focuses on advocacy, I am curious about the systems that are currently in place for teacher-directed violence and what one can do to improve them. In the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, where teacher shortages are present, I would like to work towards enhancing teachers' professional experiences.

This study further contributes to the research already conducted by notable experts in teacher-directed violence, such as McMahon, Espelage, Anderman, Reddy, and McConnell. I used a mixed-methods approach and incorporated quantitative and qualitative inquiry using IPA to analyze the shared experiences of music educators in Newfoundland and Labrador who had experienced victimization in the classroom. My study analyzed the experiences of four music

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

educators through a focus group and forty-nine music educators through a survey, all of whom work in the Newfoundland and Labrador K-12 school system.

### **1.3 My Story – An Auto-Ethnographic Approach**

In the first week of my very first teaching job, I was a victim of teacher-directed violence. While working on an activity in the classroom, I noticed that a student was not participating. Not knowing that this student had a behavioural disorder, I went to them and spent some time trying to help them to find a way to connect with what they were working on. I did not realize that encouraging this specific student would trigger them. The student became agitated and started wandering around the classroom. What I did not know was that there was a saw in my classroom that a construction worker must have left behind. The student found the saw and started waving it over their head, threatening the class. I was shocked. Fight-or-flight mode kicked in for me, and I went into “fight.” I just knew I had to protect all the students in the room at all costs. I lost all regard for my own safety and ran towards the student with the saw yelling for them to put it down. The student threw down the saw and grabbed a stool, which they swung at me and hit me square in the legs. The pain did not register at this moment as I was so intent on ensuring no student was hurt in the crossfire. I told the student to go to the office, and they told the class they would slit their throat. At this point, I thought the student had a knife. Terrified that the student might hurt themselves, I ran toward them and ripped what I thought was a knife out of their hand (it was a pencil). The student then went to the office and attempted to slit their throat with a pencil.

Shortly after the incident, the administrator came to my classroom to ask what had happened. After I told them, the administrator told me to take a break for the last fifteen minutes of class, and then I could continue with my work for the rest of the day. By the time I got out of

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

the classroom, I was shivering. I did not realize at the time that I was in shock. I had to shove my emotions down, collect myself, and dive back into my work while pretending nothing had happened. Following the incident, I spent the day wondering what I did wrong. I felt like I was at fault and that I was completely ineffective as a teacher. I was traumatized. With no training in crisis management or self-defence, I was blindsided by this incident. My fight-or-flight senses kicked in, and I ran toward the student who was brandishing the weapon. I put myself at risk to protect the students and may have escalated the situation further. Shortly after the incident, I was brought down to the office where the student was sitting at a desk. The student was made to apologize to me and was suspended for a day. There were red marks on the student's neck where they had attempted to slit their throat with a pencil while they were in the bathroom after the incident. I was not informed what kind of correspondence was made with the family. I was only told that the student was sent home.

I was informed after the incident that this student had a behavioural disorder and required a student assistant. However, because of allocations, there were not enough student assistants for the students that needed them. I never saw a student assistant in my classroom for this child. Every time I worked with this student, I was afraid. I did not know how to assist them. I was terrified that I might trigger them again, and my fear prevented me from successfully serving this student and the rest of their class. After that, through the next couple of months in this position, I experienced several violent incidents that led me to question my desire to be a teacher. It had a severe effect on my mental health. I counted the days until I would finish this teaching position and cried every day. The following year, I did not apply for long-term teaching jobs. I decided to work exclusively as a substitute teacher in order to ease my way back into teaching. One day, I

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

was faced with a large student with an exceptionality who rushed toward me and I found myself cowering in fear and gasping for air. I was suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

After speaking with other colleagues, I learned that my experiences were not unique and that numerous coworkers had also experienced traumatic incidents of teacher-directed violence in their workplaces. After hearing more and more stories and witnessing more incidents, I was led to question the practices and systems put in place to manage incidents such as those I and others had experienced, and what could be done to reduce the prevalence of violence directed against teachers in schools in Newfoundland and Labrador.

While conducting my literature review, I found as many articles as possible on teacher-directed violence and learned that this is an understudied topic. Most of the literature on school violence focuses on violence against students. While violence against teachers is a growing discussion, I discovered that the research does not focus on music educators. My original goal for this research was to do a broad-spectrum quantitative study where every teacher in Newfoundland and Labrador would be asked to participate. Using this data, I wanted to see if any subject areas might be at a higher risk for teacher victimization due to lack of support, classroom layout, the activities required in particular subject areas, or other reasons. This would potentially be one of the first studies of this nature; however, as a master's thesis, my supervisor and I felt that the topic was too broad, and I decided to focus on my own subject area: Music.

I thought about my own experiences with teacher-directed violence, and it drew me to want to learn more about my colleagues' experiences with violence. Some colleagues I had spoken to had experienced terrible incidents of violence, whereas others stated that they had never experienced a violent incident and loved their careers. I wanted to learn more about the

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

experiences of other music educators and if anything could be done to help them have more consistently positive classroom experiences.

### **1.4 The Population**

Music education is a diverse field, with music specialists teaching classroom music, band, choir, and other unique courses depending on the needs of their schools. What a music specialist teaches depends on several variables, including the school's population where they are teaching, if it is rural or urban, and the number of exceptionalities in the building. The province of Newfoundland and Labrador is widely known for its role in the fishery, with many families living in rural coastal communities for decades; however, after the collapse in the fishery, the province has faced a decline in population, thus a decline in student enrollment (Mulcahy, 2007). In a rural town where a K-12 school has only fifty students, curriculum plans would be affected, especially for music specialists, who would have to become more creative with their music program to ensure the best enrichment for their students (Mulcahy, 2007). School populations also affect the allocation of space in a school. Sometimes music specialists are expected to teach in less-than-ideal locations such as gymnasiums, cafeterias, libraries, or other shared rooms that are not built or laid out to handle large groups of students and musical instruments. Music educators must be flexible in an ever-changing environment and career. Due to the flexible nature of the music education profession, the representation in this study features participants from across the province who are currently teaching music.

# VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

## **1.5 Research Setting**

Because I conducted this study during a pandemic, the data was collected entirely online. I invited music educators who were members of the Newfoundland and Labrador Music Educators' Association (NLMEA) to participate in a survey through email and the NLMEA Facebook page. Following the survey, participants were also invited to participate in a focus group that was conducted using Webex. Because this study was conducted entirely digitally, the research had many benefits. The study's reach was extensive, with music educators from rural towns able to participate in every aspect of the study without having to worry about travel. Because of the pandemic, the government of Newfoundland and Labrador has made significant strides in making the internet more accessible across the province, and teachers may have been able to take part in this study who would not have been able to in years prior to these advancements.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

I have uncovered themes that help to understand the collective experiences of music educators in the province. It is crucial to listen to these experiences so policymakers and administration can learn from them to understand better how they can help their teachers and prevent future violent incidents. Because of the small sample size, phenomenology is an effective way to analyze the shared experiences of music educators.

The shared experiences of music educators in Newfoundland and Labrador represent a way for education officials to view the collective idea of violence against music specialists on a more national level. In a world where advocacy for the safety of children is a priority, research on the protection of teachers is severely lacking. Children will also be disadvantaged if teachers cannot perform at their best.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

By placing music educators at the forefront of this research, this study will contribute to the conversations of teacher advocacy and will act as a tool that can help analyze the current educational model in Newfoundland and Labrador.

### **1.7 Overview of the Study**

This Interpretative Phenomenological Study aims to explore the questions “what are classroom music educators’ experiences of violence, and how can school systems change to help prevent or mitigate future incidents?” Music educators’ shared experiences are articulated and interpreted in the subsequent chapters to provide perspective on the phenomenon of violence against music educators.

Chapter one of this thesis is where I introduce the phenomenon, the research question and the method. The population, research setting, and significance of the study are discussed. Finally, a brief overview of each chapter in this study is also provided in this chapter.

Chapter two of this study provides an in-depth exploration of the literature on this topic, specifically about violence directed against teachers. The definition of violence is identified within this chapter, and the phenomenon’s prevalence is established from national and international sources. Potential causes of violence directed at educators are presented, and potential stressors that could occur in a music classroom setting are discussed, along with possible solutions for specifically targeted issues in general classrooms and music classrooms. The psychological effects of teacher victimization are analyzed, and mental health and trauma are heavily discussed.

Chapter three provides an in-depth look into the methodology behind the research. The rationale for the research design is established while justifying the need for this study by filling a gap in existing research. The sampling for participants is explained in this chapter with data

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

collection methods that span over two phases. The method for data analysis is discussed, and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis is introduced. This chapter also discusses ethical considerations for participants and the study's limitations.

Chapter four of this study is where I articulate the experience by presenting the qualitative and quantitative data collected in phases one and two. The data collected represents the shared experiences of classroom music educators from across Newfoundland and Labrador. In phase one of the study, I present the quantitative results and include graphics to aid visualization. In phase two of the study, I show the qualitative data using direct quotations from the survey and the focus group. This data is presented in themes throughout this chapter developed through content analysis using Delve<sup>2</sup> (an online resource).

Chapter five provides an in-depth analysis of the data presented in chapter four. I compared data collected through other studies in chapter two within my literature review. Using the data collected through the survey and focus group, I synthesized resources with the suggestions and experiences presented by participants.

In chapter six, I summarize the experiences of the music educators who participated in this study. I provide an introspection of my perspectives throughout this journey, along with implications for the future of policymakers, administrators, and music educators. Finally, I summarize the entire experience and study.

---

<sup>2</sup> Ho, L., & Limpaecher, A. (n.d.). Delve [computer software]. Twenty To Nine, LLC, New York City. <https://delvetool.com/>: An online software that is designed for qualitative data analysis

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

Music educators have a unique job that focuses on student connection and artistic passion; however, they are often unprepared for any risk of violence that they may face in their classrooms (Bauer, 2001). Educators face challenging situations throughout their careers, and being a victim of student-directed violence can shock the system. Victimization can cause teachers to face self-doubt, experience significant psychological trauma, and even leave the profession (Daniels et al., 2007). Factoring in the music classroom as a unique school setting, this research will begin to reveal the causes of student violence directed against classroom music educators and what can be done to help prevent or mitigate future incidents.

### **2.1 Introduction**

Using a mixed-methods approach to examine the experiences of music educators, and potential solutions for violence against music educators, the articles for this literature review feature a combination of research methods. The research on violence against teachers is organized thematically in the following categories: defining violence, the prevalence of teacher-directed violence, psychological effects of victimization, causes of student violence against teachers, risk factors in a music education setting, and solutions. In terms of violence against music educators, there is limited literature available. The only literature that is specifically focused on music education and behaviour issues is anecdotal, therefore strengthening the need for further research.

### **2.2 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)**

Because the phenomenon of violence directed against music educators was the focus of this study, I determined that Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was a practical approach to this study. According to Noon (2018), Jonathan Smith established IPA in 1996.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

Smith (2011) describes IPA as a methodology that focuses on the lived experiences of its participants and how those participants interpret their experiences. There are a few aspects that make IPA unique. IPA is more than just a method. It is viewed as a methodology with an organized framework that guides the researcher through the process (University of Auckland, n.d.). Larkin et al. (2006) state, while compiling the experiences of participants is one key aspect of IPA, the interpretation of these experiences by the researcher is critical to the methodology.

Using a small homogeneous sample size of between 2 and 25 people, researchers must ask open-ended questions pertaining to the phenomenon to encapsulate the experiences of the participants (Alase, 2017). Both Noon (2018) and Smith (2011) discuss the concept of hermeneutics within the realm of IPA as an integral part of the analytical process. Dallmayr (2009) described hermeneutics as the “practice or art of interpretation” (p. 23). Smith and Fieldsend (2021) also describe this interpretation of experiences as a search for meaning. This search for meaning is a crucial aspect of hermeneutics (Alase, 2017). Researchers collect meaningful data by looking directly at the source of the experiences and the people who experienced the phenomenon.

The University of Auckland (n.d.) discusses data analysis within IPA as a unique process that involves writing observations alongside the data to comment on the findings while familiarizing oneself with it. Alase (2017) suggests a three-tiered process where the researcher condenses the data into large chunks, more concise sections, and then into pertinent sentences or comments that encapsulate the data. These sections can then be used for the researcher’s interpretation, and many of the direct quotations can be used to accurately portray the lived experiences of participants. Larkin et al. (2006) argue that there are two goals of IPA: to describe the participants’ experiences and to “provide a critical and conceptual commentary upon the

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

participants' personal 'sense-making' activities" (p. 104). By taking the data and creating larger overarching "emergent" themes, then developing "superordinate" themes from the broad topics, the researcher can then develop a deeper analysis of the data gathered (University of Auckland, n.d.). By analyzing the collective experiences of participants, the researcher can find meaning in a phenomenon, and help to give participants a voice through the sharing of their stories.

### **2.3 Defining Violence**

Violence comes in many forms that can potentially significantly negatively impact victims. Violence is frequently viewed as a physical altercation resulting in potential injury; however, physical contact is just one aspect. Espelage et al. (2013), McMahon et al. (2019), and Wilson et al. (2011) argue that violence against teachers can range from verbal threats to theft or physical assault. In their research article, Espelage et al. (2013) use secondary sources focusing on violence prevention techniques to create a guide for schools in the United States. The authors assert that any act that leaves the victim feeling uncomfortable or unsafe could be construed as violence. In the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association bulletin, Sheppard (2022) released an article on violence in the workplace, specifically for teachers. Sheppard (2022) describes violence as "the attempted or actual exercise of physical force to cause injury to a worker and includes threatening statements or behaviour which gives a worker reason to believe that he or she is at risk of injury" (p. 8). The idea that violence can take many forms changes how violence should be viewed and indicates a need to re-evaluate current practices.

### **2.4 Prevalence of Teacher-Directed Violence**

Violence in schools is a prominent issue; however, violence against teachers is under-researched and under-recognized. Recently researchers have begun to dive into teacher advocacy to help reduce the risk of violence against teachers and raise awareness (Anderman et al., 2018,

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

Bass et al., 2016, Daniels et al., 2007, Espelage et al., 2013, McMahon et al., 2019, Sheppard, 2022, Wilson et al., 2011). The reality is that 80% of teachers in K-12 schools reported experiencing some form of violence in a year (McMahon et al., 2014). Espelage et al. (2013) state that over half of the teachers who experience victimization report multiple altercations. In a time when advocacy for protecting children is so prominent, it is difficult to achieve this without also ensuring teachers' safety.

### **2.5 Psychological Effects of Victimization**

The impact of victimization because of violence can be devastating and have lasting psychological effects that can significantly affect the lives of the victims. In their article, Daniels et al. (2007) use secondary sources to compile information targeting the psychological repercussions following violence directed at school staff to create a resource for psychologists. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a common side effect of trauma, including violence. Some side effects of PTSD are night terrors, changes in mood, and increased fear (Daniels et al., 2007). If left untreated, there can be many negative implications for victims of violence, including burnout, a loss of a sense of efficacy in the teaching profession, and leaving the profession altogether (Bass et al., 2016). Bass et al. (2016) focus on teacher burnout and engagement following acts of violence against educators in their quantitative study. They use data gathered from a survey in the Northeastern United States.

When teachers experience burnout or perceive themselves as ineffective in the classroom, their perceptions can become a reality if not given the proper support. Perceptions such as these can place teachers at a higher risk for repeated victimization (Bass et al., 2016). In their 2018 article, Anderman et al. conduct a qualitative study to analyze how educators react to victimization using open-ended questions in an anonymous survey. They focus on the theory of

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

attribution, where emotional responses lead to specific physical behaviours. Their study reveals that educators who experience anger after victimization are more likely to confront their attacker and seek administrative support. In contrast, victims who experience feelings of fear are more likely to resist confrontation and confide in friends and family (Anderman et al., 2018).

Anderman et al. (2018), Daniels et al. (2007), and Wilson et al. (2011) also discuss the idea that residual fear can significantly impact teaching efficacy and attitudes in the classroom. If a teacher fears their students, managing behaviours and issues in a classroom becomes very difficult. In one of the very few Canadian resources on the topic, Wilson et al. (2011) use a quantitative survey to analyze the self-reported consequences of teachers who are victims of violence. Featuring educators in BC, the survey focuses on the prevalence of violence within the province, and the types of violence experienced, stating that people who reported feelings such as fear following their victimization also indicated an increased risk of leaving the profession. Teachers are at high risk for psychological consequences without proper counselling following a violent incident. In their 2007 study, Daniels et al. state that after a traumatic school incident such as a school shooting, counsellors and psychologists are deployed to schools to help students deal with their trauma. However, teachers are often not included in this trauma response. To expand on this, Daniels et al. (2007) reveal that only 25% of principals require their employees to seek counselling after a traumatic incident in the workplace. For the well-being of educators, both mentally and physically, teachers must get the help they need following a traumatic incident.

### **2.6 Causes of Student Violence Against Teachers**

Many things can lead to classroom disruption, but some disruptions can seriously harm teachers and students, and it is crucial to learn what can cause a traumatic incident. In their 2013

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

article, Espelage et al. (2013) list several predictors of violence against teachers. They state that students prone to violent behaviour may have specific triggers to watch for. Indicators could include reactions and behaviours specific to the person that must be observed over time. It is crucial to know and understand the needs of the students in a school to serve them and the people around them. Espelage et al. (2013), Horner and Macaya (2018), VanDerveer (1989), and Woody (2001) argue that classroom management is paramount above all else, and without it, the risk for victimization in the classroom is augmented. Espelage et al. (2013) also discuss the need for mutual respect in a school. They suggest that violence against teachers is more likely when the student and teacher in question do not have a good relationship. When a student believes that the teacher does not view them with respect, it diminishes the student's level of respect for the teacher, and if a teacher does something that the student perceives is unfair, the student could act out in protest, leading to violence (Espelage et al., 2013).

A significant risk factor for teacher-directed violence is a lack of administrative support. Administrators are the backbone of a school, and if they are not working cohesively with their teachers, behaviour management can become seriously problematic. McMahon et al. (2017) indicate that a lack of administrative support can lead teachers to blame themselves for their victimization and fear in their classrooms. They imply that a lack of administrative support could also be construed as violence against teachers. McMahon et al. (2019) state that administrators who are not responsive to violence against teachers can contribute to potential repetitions of the behaviour and an increased sense of fear in the workforce.

### **2.7 Risk Factors in a Music Education Setting**

Music educators face unique classroom challenges regarding behaviour management, which could contribute to an increased risk of violence in the classroom. While the music room

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

in a school is often seen as a haven for students, music educators sometimes need help with classroom management. In their 2001 article, Bauer uses anecdotal evidence to bring to light several potential risk factors for music educators engaged in ensemble music courses in K-12 schools. He discusses class sizes in ensemble courses, suggesting that the large numbers in a band or choral setting make it difficult to spot behaviours before they escalate. Bauer (2001) also indicates that ensemble music is often comprised of different age groups and ability levels, which could lead to frustration or boredom and contribute to classroom behaviour issues. There is also a potential issue with the layout of the music room. Usually, in a music room, there are no desks, and chairs are often spread out around the room in a disorderly fashion. Some students must stand or sit on the floor for parts of or all of the class time (Bauer, 2001). When students are brought into an environment with less structure or a different structure than they are used to, it could be triggering for a student who needs more consistency.

### **2.8 Solutions in the Classroom**

Knowing the risk some educators take when going to work every day, it is essential to take that knowledge and work towards finding effective ways to prevent or mitigate violence against teachers. Firstly, it is vital to know and understand the risk of violence in the workplace; therefore, teachers must be provided with all information regarding students at risk for being violent and what precautions should be taken to minimize any risk for teachers (Sheppard, 2022). Several researchers have taken qualitative and quantitative approaches toward gathering potential solutions for the issue of student violence against teachers. In their qualitative study, McMahon et al. (2019) present suggestions made by educators on how to mitigate violence against teachers using open-ended questions in a survey. Teachers discuss the need for more appropriate consequences for specific issues. Suspension is often the first line of defence for students who

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

commit violent acts against teachers and is an ineffective punishment for some students. There is a need to tailor the response to violent issues to the needs of individual students. Teachers must get to know their students deeply because some students have specific difficulties in classrooms that could lead to violent outbursts. Espelage et al. (2013) argue that a student with a positive relationship with a teacher is less likely to be violent.

While relationships are essential in preventing violence, many other factors impact a classroom's safety, including class size, teacher training, and resources. McMahon et al. (2019) advocate for reducing class size to minimize the risk of violence toward teachers. Classrooms frequently hold upwards of thirty children and sometimes forty, and teachers are then left with the impossible task of maintaining control over the class while trying to impart knowledge. Even if there are no exceptionalities in a class of such a large number of children, it would be nearly impossible to avoid behavioural issues. When a class of that size has exceptionalities, the risk of teacher-directed violence increases exponentially. Often with classes this size, teachers need help and require additional teaching staff in the classroom. Unfortunately, resources such as these are in high demand. Schools need more human resources, forcing teachers into overcrowded classrooms without the physical support to teach successfully. Sheppard (2022) advocates for educators in Newfoundland and Labrador to request risk assessments and look at the assistance provided to ensure the school is meeting the requirements and if the conditions need to be re-evaluated. McMahon et al. (2019) and Espelage et al. (2013) recommend that additional teacher supports, such as guidance counsellors and student assistants, be hired in schools to meet the demand and increase the level of safety in the classroom. In addition to increasing school staff, training also needs to be improved (Espelage et al., 2013; McMahon et al., 2019). For example, music educators are often sent into the workforce after graduating with no training in behaviour

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

management. Hedden (2015) conducted a study on music education students and offered a behaviour management course over four semesters to four separate music education groups. By acting out scenarios where students were faced with potential behaviour issues that they might encounter in the workforce, they were trained to approach and manage these situations. By providing students with a simulated and controlled teaching environment to deal with behaviour issues, they graduated from their programs feeling more confident and prepared to face their new careers. McMahon et al. (2014) advocate for training for all teachers, regardless of their specialty, on behaviour management, crisis management, and de-escalating potentially violent incidents. For teachers and students to be safe, their safety must take priority. Additional training, resources, and smaller classes are essential starting points.

Contrary to the beliefs of some researchers, Horner and Macaya (2018) view negative discipline as an ineffective method for reducing school violence. The authors gather pre-existing data to justify the use of “Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports” (PBIS) in schools (Horner & Macaya, 2018). Staff and administration work together to build a set of social expectations for their students and then spend consistent time and effort to establish these expectations in the classroom by praising and reinforcing positive behaviour. These expectations inherently reduce the risk of unwanted behaviour whereas negative discipline such as suspension are seen as less efficient. Numerous scholars praise this method and suggest that having a clear set of enforced classroom rules makes it clear to students what is expected and respects any required discipline. (Espelage et al., 2013; McMahon, 2019). The idea behind this method is that students respond better to positive reinforcement rather than the negativity of discipline. By encouraging and celebrating success, students are more likely to strive for future success, thus minimizing the need for discipline.

### **2.9 Solutions in the Music Classroom**

Music educators face unique challenges in the classroom and require more tailored guidance. Considering Baur's (2001) discussions on the larger class sizes in band or choir, it is helpful to arrange a seating or standing plan that puts all students within a clear view of the teacher. Bands are often set up in a semi-circle, and choirs regularly use risers for this reason. With an organized seating plan, it is much easier to move students who might be more of a behavioural concern into a good spot for the teacher and the student. Both Woody (2001), VanDerveer (1980), and Baur (2001) discuss student-teacher relationships and acknowledge ability differences in large ensembles. By knowing and understanding each student's needs, advanced students can be given more complex classwork so they are not bored and disruptive. The students with higher needs should have a more tailored experience that meets them at their individualized level. Some adjustments can be made, such as giving them a more accessible part to play or some one-on-one tutoring to help bring them to the same level as their classmates. Woody (2001) also suggests that the pace of a music class should be closely observed to encourage higher levels of attention and prevent fidgeting and boredom that can lead to risky behaviour. He encourages music educators to take the time to plan out a class that moves quickly and does not spend too much time on one task (Woody, 2001). By keeping individual activities concise, students can remain more consistently engaged in their tasks and are less likely to face frustration on a challenging section.

### **2.10 Gaps and Limitations**

Several gaps and limitations in the literature presented offer a need for further investigation. There is no research available that focuses explicitly on violence against music educators. The only research public on behaviour issues in music education is over ten years old

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

and primarily anecdotal indicating a need for more recent data. Hedden's (2015) study on the implementation of music education courses in music education programs lacks evidence, and much of the study is inconclusive. However, it still indicates potential useful solutions for music educators that align with the studies done by McMahon et al. (2019) that also promote teacher training. Lastly, there is a lack of Canadian resources. Most studies that apply to the topic of violence against teachers are conducted in the United States. Wilson et al. (2011) have one of few articles that focus specifically on Canada. Their study is limited to British Columbia, which has a drastically different geographic, economic, and ethnographic population type than Eastern Canada.

### **2.11 Summary**

Many educators experience violence within a school year (McMahon, 2014). There are solutions that can and should be implemented to ensure teacher safety. There are numerous reasons that music educators are in a unique position for victimization. Music educators face unique challenges that include substantial class sizes, classrooms that do not have desks and incorporate specific seating or standing requirements, classrooms that are isolated from other areas of the school, and wide varieties of age and ability levels within one class. There are solutions for general educators to mitigate or prevent violence against teachers however the specific challenges of music educators present a need for further research.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

In this study, I took a mixed-methods approach using an online survey through Qualtrics<sup>3</sup> (Appendix C) with quantitative questions to determine the prevalence of violence against music educators and open-ended qualitative questions to expand upon individual experiences with teacher-directed violence. A subsequent focus group was created from a phenomenological standpoint where participants all came from the same work background and discussed the phenomenon of violence against music educators (Appendix D). I conducted a discussion that expanded upon personal experiences with violence and potential causes of violence and explored potential solutions to help prevent or mitigate violence against music educators in future. Participants of both the survey and focus group were required to provide consent (Appendices' A and B), and the study was approved by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (Appendix E). Because a study on teacher-directed violence that focuses on classroom music education had not been done before, it was essential to assess the phenomenon from multiple angles. Identifying the prominence of violence against music educators in Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as the shared experiences of the phenomenon itself, justified the need for a mixed-methods approach.

Because this is an understudied area, it was crucial to gain a basic understanding of the prevalence of the phenomenon. Therefore, a larger population was used for the survey portion of the study. A smaller sample size of four people was used for the focus group to analyze participants' shared experiences. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is a relatively new methodology, with the first published paper appearing in 1996. However, an uptake in the

---

<sup>3</sup> Lopez, A. (2023). Qualtrics [Computer Software]. CoreXM. Retrieved from <https://www.qualtrics.com/> : A secure method of collecting anonymous data from participants

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

use of the methodology can be seen in the rise of publications after 2008 (Smith, 2011). Using open-ended qualitative questions is compelling for gathering data from participants. The data gathered can be richer because where questions are broad, there is more room to uncover information that may offer insight into further study.

Research on violence against educators explored in the previous chapter reveals aspects of violence that teachers can experience other than physical violence, the trauma that educators might face in the aftermath of victimization, and region-specific difficulties that certain countries or cultures might face. This study will contribute to the expanding literature by focusing on experiences in Newfoundland and Labrador and, more uniquely, music educators' experiences.

The rationale for using a phenomenological research design will be discussed in detail in this chapter. I will also discuss the selection procedures, the role of the researcher, and ethics. I will further discuss the methods of data collection and analysis used in Phase One and Phase Two as well as the limitations of this study.

### **3.1 The Rationale for Research Design**

In this study, I aimed to explore music educators' experiences with teacher-directed violence in Newfoundland and Labrador and questioned how to prevent or mitigate future teacher victimization. A mixed-methods approach was the most effective way to gather this information. Through this study, I collected quantitative data to quantify the severity of the issue within the school system, understand potential causes, and then used a qualitative approach to dive deeper into more open-ended responses from teachers describing personal experiences with violence. IPA was designed to help researchers understand participants' experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this case, I studied the specific phenomenon of violence against music educators. Therefore, it was essential to identify the issue's prominence and then to analyze shared

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

experiences of this phenomenon further. Using IPA, I focused the study on music educators within the same site: The Newfoundland Labrador Music Educators' Association. Participants in the focus group had all experienced teacher-directed violence. Using IPA, I analyzed the data and narrowed information from broad to more specific concepts while making interpretations of the meaning of participants' lived experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Noon and Sheffield (2018) discussed the validity of IPA in educational research and determined that because the educational experience is so uniquely varied, IPA is an excellent fit as it seeks to create scientific data from the subjectivity of an individual's experience.

### **3.2 Sampling and Participants**

Using IPA, I focused on building a detailed analysis of the phenomenon of violence against music educators. Specific participant selection had to occur to achieve this. The sample was drawn from the Newfoundland and Labrador Music Educators' Association Facebook Page (NLMEA). The NLMEA represents music educators across Newfoundland and Labrador. In the NLMEA, there are over 477 members on their Facebook page, including classroom and private music educators. This site was selected to reach the most potential participants under one umbrella within the province. Members of the NLMEA Facebook page can work for multiple different public or private school boards across the province or in private music studios. Classroom Music specialists in public schools work within either the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District or the Conseil Scolaire Francophone and are provided with specific curriculum guides to follow. In this group, there are retired teachers, teachers who have moved out of the province, and non-music specialists who are in classroom music positions who are seeking guidance and resources from music specialists currently working in classroom music settings.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

Regarding classroom management and incident reporting, the administration at each school follows specific guidelines and protocols, which provide some control variables for the study (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, n.d.). A sample of four teachers who expressed interest in participating and have experienced teacher-directed violence were selected for the focus group. They were given the pseudonyms “Focus Group Participant A, B, C, and D” for this study. For the survey, participants were required to be classroom music educators currently teaching in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. They were randomly assigned the pseudonyms “Survey Participant 1, 2, 3...” for this study. Of the 477 members in the NLMEA, there were 49 participants, so approximately 10% of the NLMEA Facebook page participated in this study.

Originally the projected study was to have five participants in the focus group and one-hundred participants in the survey. Five people indicated an interest in participating in the focus group. However, with scheduling issues, only four could participate, which was still a good sampling for this phase of the study. There were 49 participants in the survey. Data on gender, race, and age was not gathered however, sampling on years of experience, level of education, specific subject areas, and the general location in which the participant works was used. The data gathered from the survey revealed several consistent themes among participants.

### **3.3 Data Collection Methods**

There were two phases of the study, with different data collection methods for each. In phase one, a mixed-methods survey was used to gather data from a larger sample of participants. The survey was created using Qualtrics. Participants were asked quantitative questions such as the region in which they teach, which types of courses they teach, if they had experienced violence in their classrooms, and what types of violence they experienced. These questions were

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

asked to understand the prevalence of violence within specific age groups in music education, which music courses were at a higher risk of teacher victimization, and what types of violence were most prominent in music classrooms. Participants were also asked to write long-answer open-ended qualitative questions to understand their most notable experiences with violence. They were asked other related questions to expand on their thoughts on why specific incidents occurred and how they could have been prevented. There was no word count limit for these responses however, the time commitment required to fill out long responses could have presented a potential limitation for the study. I took the participants' qualitative responses and transferred them into "Delve." Delve is a commonly used tool used to help categorize and analyze qualitative data. I felt it would increase my ability to work through the material gathered through the study. Qualtrics also took the quantitative data and processed it, putting it into various charts and graphs for further visualization.

In phase two of the study, four music educators participated in a focus group. The focus group occurred in the evening on a weekday after work when the schedules aligned with the participants. The focus group took place over two hours, where participants were asked to expand on open-ended questions related to their direct experiences with violence, possible causes, classroom supports, and potential improvements that could be made. The focus group occurred using Webex. The focus group was recorded using video and audio, so I could identify the speaker and correctly categorize personal experiences. After the focus group was recorded, I transcribed the recording to text and uploaded it into "Delve" where I analyzed the data and categorized it into themes. After both phases were complete, using "Delve," I could compare results from each method, and a number of commonalities became clear.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

While both phases involved similar questions, each phase uncovered valuable data that justified the use of each method. In the focus group, participants could give real depth to their answers. Through communicating with each other, they were able to gain new understandings of their own experiences and build connections and new support systems for each other to help them work through their trauma. In the survey, tangible statistics made it possible to create graphics for the study, which I found helpful. There were also remarkable stories told within the survey, which gave perspective on the severity of the issue for some music educators.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

#### ***3.4.1 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis***

I decided to use Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as my methodology because, in this study, I specifically focused on the lived experiences of classroom music educators and the phenomenon of teacher-directed violence. My sample was homogenous as participants had to be classroom music educators who are currently teaching in Newfoundland and Labrador. I broadened my study using a mixed-methods approach to capture the scope of the issue within the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, however, when focusing on the qualitative aspects of the study, the individual experiences of participants created a rich pool of data to draw from using IPA.

After the focus group was completed, I transcribed the audio and using Delve, I inputted my qualitative survey transcripts in one section and my focus group transcripts in a separate section. As I read through the transcripts, I had a journal in which I inputted any initial comments or notes I had as I wrote my observations. Using Delve, I then began to break down the text into blocks of meaningful content, which I then created broad-scale labels for. I created codes for any comment that described an incident, the layout of a classroom, or named specific

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

emotions or actions, as well as comments that conceptualized systemic issues or feelings. I then created a number of themes and identified specific quotes that fit within the themes. These emergent themes became the overarching themes for the entire study. The themes I chose were the incident of violence itself, the aftermath, support, and prevention.

Within each theme, I created superordinate themes, expanded upon each topic, and discussed the emergent themes in further detail. Within the emergent theme of ‘the experience of violence against music educators,’ I included superordinate themes of types of violence, incident reporting, and incident analysis. Under ‘the aftermath of violence against music educators,’ I included emotional responses, mental health, passion, desensitization, and thoughts of leaving the profession. Within ‘music educators’ perceived support following a violent incident,’ I included classroom support, administrator support, community support, school support, and respect. Finally, under ‘The prevention of violence against music educators,’ we noticed themes around classroom layout and teacher training. These superordinate themes allowed me to provide a deeper analysis of the data to create a richer view of the experiences of each participant. After completing these steps, I read through the data again and highlighted specific pertinent quotes to use within my thesis. I used these quotes throughout the thesis to paint an accurate picture of what participants lived experiences looked like using their own words.

### **3.5 Role of the Researcher**

As a certified music educator, I approached this study from a phenomenological standpoint to find out more information. With my own experiences pointing me toward the potential for a phenomenon in violence against music educators, I had to see if there was enough data to indicate an issue before expanding to a focus group. Through my work, I have always had

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

a deep need to advocate for disadvantaged people, and discussing this phenomenon with other music educators was eye-opening.

Throughout the study, I worked to avoid asking leading questions and tried to create a safer space to discuss concepts openly. I ensured all questions were open-ended and used direct quotes from participants to support my analysis.

### **3.6 Ethical Considerations**

Before commencing any study, it was important to consider any potential ethical concerns. These concerns affected the questions asked in the survey and how the focus group was conducted. Protecting the participants emotionally, physically, and anonymously was paramount. Before the study, considerations were discussed and planned around data storage, participant recruitment, protecting anonymity, and any potential emotional triggers that could be caused.

The proposal for this research was reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to comply with Memorial University's ethics policy. Participants had a right to anonymity, and the data collected through the survey was completely anonymous. All names were omitted from the focus group, and the data was anonymized, including community and school names.

Teachers were recruited through the Newfoundland and Labrador Music Educators Association Facebook page and email. It was decided not to involve recruitment through administrators to prevent any potential feelings of pressure. Through the survey, participants were required to read through a consent form (see Appendix B) and acknowledge using a check mark that they could provide informed consent. Participants were then taken to a separate survey where they could provide contact info should they desire to participate in a focus group to

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

maintain anonymity. This information was optional. Therefore participants could keep their anonymity if they desired. The participants who agreed to participate in the focus group were provided with a separate consent form (see Appendix A) with information about the focus group's specificity.

Considering the subject matter involved in discussing potential trauma, certain risks were involved in this study. The issues of re-living trauma were categorized under potential psychological risks; therefore, participants were provided with the phone number for the Mental Health Crisis Line, which they could call if they were experiencing any emotional distress following the discussion.

Only Rosemary Lawton and Dr. David Buley had access to the raw data collected through the survey and focus group. The data consisted of Webex recordings, survey data from Qualtrics and notes collected from the Webex focus group on Word documents. Electronic data was stored on a password-protected external hard drive and will be kept for a minimum of five years, after which it will be deleted from the hard drive.

In the consent form before completing the survey, text was included stating that once the survey had been submitted, the participant could no longer withdraw from the study because it was anonymous. In the consent form, before participating in the focus group, participants were made aware of their ability to withdraw from the study any time before August 31, 2022. No participants chose to withdraw from this study.

A couple of potential benefits for participating in this study were presented to participants. Participating in a survey on teacher victimization could help to give participants a sense of validation within their own experiences. Participants of the focus group would be able to hear stories of similar experiences from other participants. By sharing these stories, participants

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

might feel less isolated in their experiences, which may help empower them. By quantitatively analyzing the prevalence and potential causes of violence against music educators, findings may suggest concrete and tangible trends indicating a need for change in the education system. By qualitatively analyzing the stories and experiences of individual participants, insight might be brought towards potential solutions for teacher-directed violence in music settings. If these trends are uncovered, adaptations in the teaching workforce may be justified, and the education system could improve.

### **3.7 Limitations of Study**

As in any study, certain limitations must be considered when reading the data collected. There were 49 participants in this study. The percentage of the data collected for those who experienced violence was high. However, it must be considered that music educators who had experienced violence may have been more likely to participate in the study than those who had never experienced violence. Participants for this study had to be currently teaching music in Newfoundland and Labrador, excluding a number of potential participants. I was contacted by retired teachers, teachers who had moved out of the province, and people who had left teaching due to violent incidents. None of these teachers were able to be included in this study because they were no longer teaching classroom music within the province.

### **3.8 Summary**

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis has been one of the leading methodological approaches to qualitative research in the last two decades. The focus of IPA is to analyze the shared experiences of a specific phenomenon and interpret any meaning from participants' discussions. Violence against educators is a relatively new topic of study. So far, research does not touch on classroom music. This study will fill a gap in the research using a mixed-methods

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

approach to determine the risk of violence against music educators in a survey and dive into the experiences of a smaller sample of teachers through a focus group.

## **Chapter 4: Articulating the Experience**

During the two phases of this study, participants openly shared their experiences with teacher-directed violence in the music classroom. Participants contributed their experiences and their thoughts on how administrators, unions, and school districts could help prevent future issues from occurring.

In phase one of this study, 49 participants completed an anonymous survey. The responses from participants who had never experienced violence were short. They provided statistics that could be primarily quantitatively analyzed with little extra detail to draw from for qualitative analysis. On the other hand, participants who had experienced violence were very open and provided detailed information about their traumas and numerous helpful suggestions for improving the work environment for music educators. Several participants who had not experienced violence reported zero issues in their classrooms and classroom layouts and felt fully supported by their school and district.

In phase two of this study, four music educators participated in a two-hour focus group. Each participant in this study phase had experienced teacher-directed violence and openly discussed their experiences with the other focus group participants. Participants were asked open-ended questions about their experiences and expanded upon each question, which organically evolved into discussions amongst each other, adding to the richness of the collected data (see Appendix D). Before the focus group, participants were reminded of their rights within the letter of consent through Memorial University. They were made aware that while their names would be anonymized, this did not ensure anonymity. The potential lack of anonymity for participants did not deter anyone from taking part in the focus group. The participants in the focus group provided their consent and willingly shared their personal stories as long as their

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

names were not mentioned in the study. I made it clear to them that while they would be given pseudonyms, anyone who had been a part of the specific incidents they described might be able to identify who they were, but they still told their stories in detail. The focus group maintained a comfortable, informal feel, and participants were very open and welcoming to each other. They often built upon questions that I had posed and asked additional questions to the other participants to clarify specific answers, thus expanding on the study's results. Participants were vocal about wanting their stories to be told in an effort to ensure an accurate portrayal of the issues that classroom music educators face.

During both phase one and phase two of the study, several shared themes arose about various aspects of teacher-directed violence, including the incident of violence itself, the aftermath, support, and prevention. Participants will only be referred to as “participants” or “music educators” to protect anonymity. This chapter will begin by describing statistics gathered through phase one of the study. Next, this chapter will focus on the qualitative data collected through phase one and phase two of the study, expanding on participants' desire to enter the music education profession before being confronted with their experiences with violence, the aftermath, and how they could be prevented or mitigated in the future.

### **4.1 Phase 1: Quantitative Results**

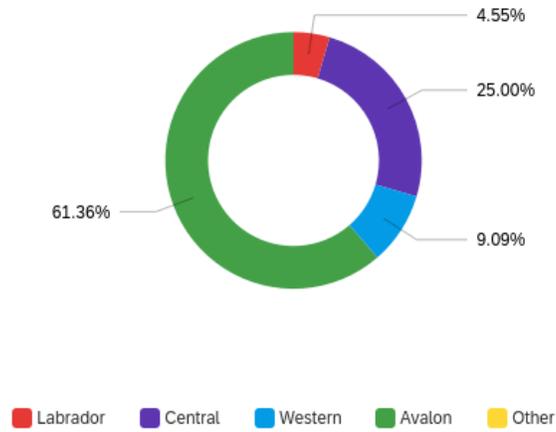
This survey was conducted through Qualtrics. Qualtrics created some helpful graphs that provide useful visuals, which are included below. A total of 49 music educators responded to the survey. The survey was distributed to music educators across the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Newfoundland and Labrador is divided into regions by the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District, which I took into consideration when conducting the study. On their website, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador states, “currently, in

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

Newfoundland and Labrador, with a population of approximately 510,550, there are 275 municipalities, 172 local service districts and 120 unincorporated areas. Approximately ninety percent (90%) of communities have less than 1,000 residents” (n.d.). According to Statistics Canada’s 2021 census, the population of the Avalon Peninsula is 271,878, Central Newfoundland is 38,458, Western Newfoundland is 77,980, and Labrador is 26,555. These numbers indicate that 53.2% reside on the Avalon Peninsula, 18.2% reside in Central Newfoundland, 15.2% reside in Western Newfoundland, and 5.2% reside in Labrador. Of the participants, 61% were from the Avalon, 25% were from Central, 9% were from Western, and 4% were from Labrador (Figure 4.1). Of the participants, 30% had been teaching for under five years, 14% had been teaching for 6-10 years, 26% had been teaching for 11-20 years, and 28% had been teaching for over 20 years. In figure 4.2, one can see the levels of education that participants reached. Participants could select more than one answer therefore within this table, only some indicated receiving a high school diploma for instance and many only selected their highest level of education. In the “other” section of this question, participants listed “Bachelor of Music Therapy”, “RCM grade 6 piano examinations”, and “completing Masters of Ed.” It must be noted that typically, music educators must have a Bachelor of Music and a Bachelor of Music Education degree or equivalent in order to be considered certified to teach classroom music; however, some instances allow for non-certified teachers to be placed in music specialist positions, and some teachers get additional certifications to improve their teaching skills beyond what is expected from them.

# VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

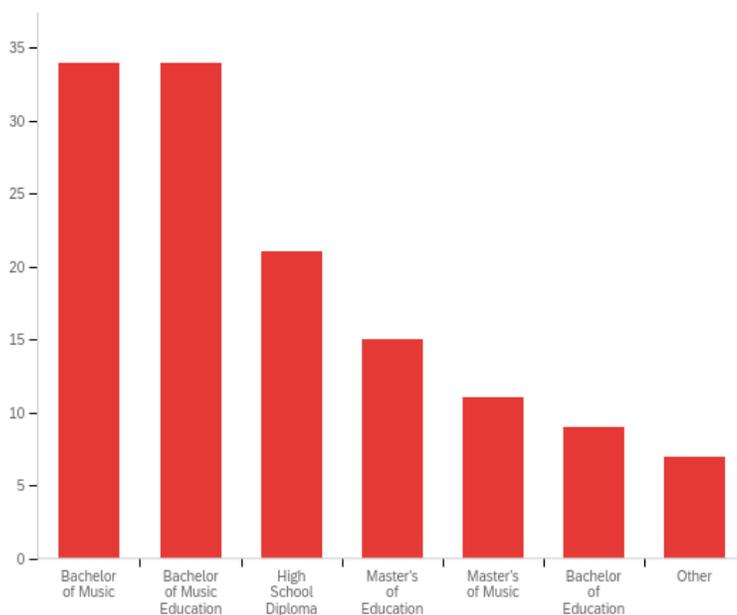
Figure 4.1 Regional Demographics of Survey Participants (Percentage of participants)



#	Field	Choice Count
1	Labrador	2
2	Central	11
3	Western	4
4	Avalon	27
5	Other	0
		44

Showing rows 1 - 6 of 6

Figure 4.2 Teacher Training Demographics (Number of Participants)

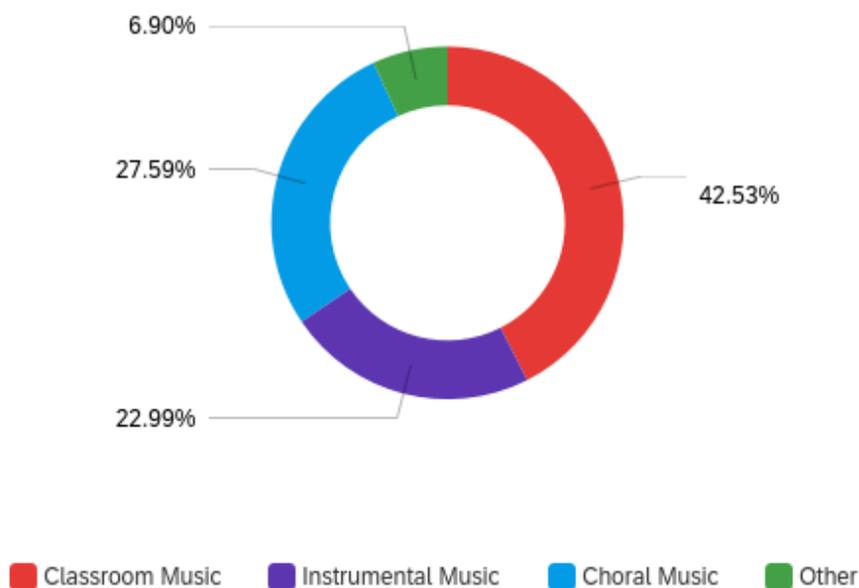


## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

For the question “what ages do you teach?” unfortunately, some participants wrote in ages, and some wrote the grades that they teach, making it impossible to decipher which was which, rendering the data unusable.

In Figure 4.3, participants could select multiple responses. Teachers were asked what subject areas they taught. 42% of teachers said they taught classroom music, 27% said they taught choral music, 22% said they taught instrumental music, and 6% selected “other.” In the “other” category, participants also wrote “substitute,” “social studies,” and “general classroom substituting.” It is worth noting that some music educators teach other subjects alongside music to maintain a full-time position and music education specialists who substitute also substitute in other subject areas. Of the participants in this survey, 71% said their music program was mandatory for students to take, 11% said the program was not mandatory, and 16% selected “other.”

Figure 4.3 Music Education Subject Area (Percentage of participants)



## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

Prior to the start of the survey, a statement was included to define violence prior to the start of the survey stating:

Violence is often viewed as a physical altercation resulting in potential injury. However, physical contact is just one aspect. Researchers such as Espelage et al. (2013), McMahon et al. (2019), and Wilson et al. (2011) argue, violence against teachers can range from verbal threats to theft, or physical assault (Appendix B).

When asked about violence, 59% of participants stated that they had been a victim of teacher-directed violence within their career, 33% stated they had not, and 7% selected “maybe” (Figure 4.4). Of those participants, 12% stated they had been victimized within the past school year. In Figure 4.5, participants were able to select multiple responses. When asked about the types of violence they had experienced, 17 participants selected “property damage,” 13 participants selected “physical threats,” 23 participants selected “verbal threats,” one person selected “cyber bullying,” 10 participants selected “physical assault,” one participant selected “threats with a weapon,” and 8 participants selected “theft” (Figure 4.5). What is interesting about this section of the survey is that three participants who had initially stated that they had not been victims of teacher-directed violence then selected that they had personally experienced incidents in the later question. Incidents that these three individuals selected were “property damage,” “verbal threats,” and “theft.” Of the incidents that participants acknowledged in the survey, 57% stated that they reported the incident, 30% stated they had not reported it, and 12% selected “other.” The responses written in the “other” section were: “I have not been victimized at all,” “Reported to administration but not a governing body such as the NLTA,” “It was communicated to the administrator,” “reported the verbal threats, not the property damage,” and “some yes, some no.”

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

Figure 4.4 Participant Experiences with Victimization

Question: Have you been a victim of teacher-directed violence in your career? (Number of Participants)

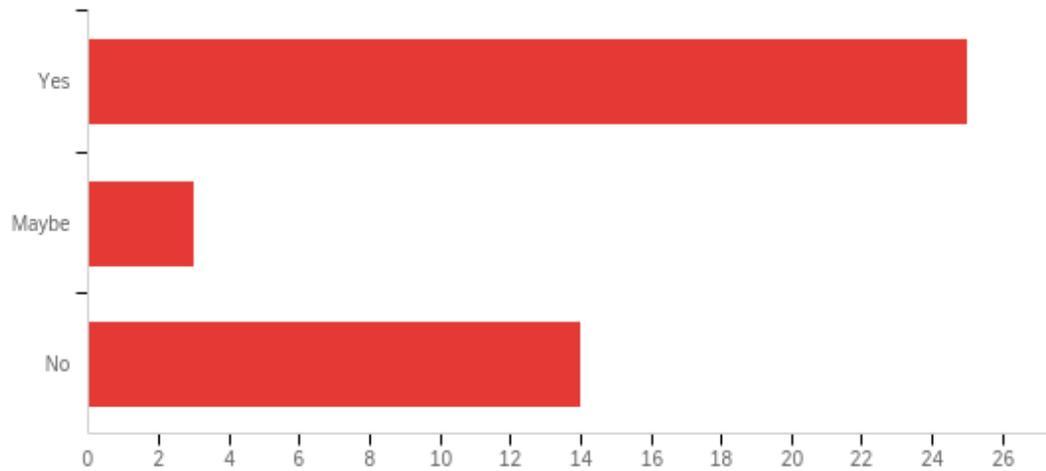
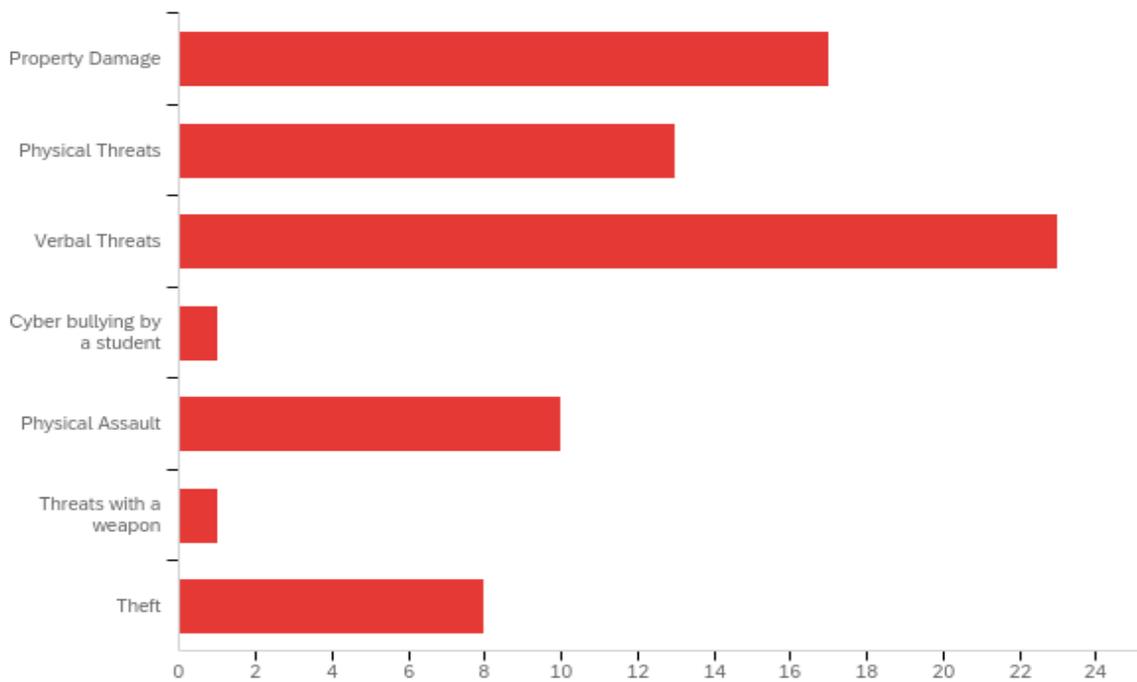


Figure 4.5 Types of Violence Experienced (Number of participants)



## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

### 4.2 Phase 2: Qualitative Results

This data section comes from the open-ended survey questions and the focus group. As previously stated, the survey had 49 participants, and the focus group had 4 participants. While the responses to the survey were very insightful, the focus group allowed for an expansion of specific questions and answers, therefore enriching the study. Several themes have emerged throughout the study, and the findings have been grouped below.

#### *4.2.1 The Experience of Violence Against Music Educators*

##### **4.2.1.1 Types of Violence.**

Violence is often seen as a physical altercation resulting in injury. However, researchers have established that the concept of violence is much broader and can take many forms. Some aspects of violence include verbal assault, theft, threats, bullying, physical violence, and vandalism.

Most participants who described experiences of verbal assault discussed the use of curse words within their experiences. Survey Participant 9 stated, “I had another extremely defiant student who refused to listen to anything. He called me a bitch.” Survey Participant 19 mentioned having a student come up close to them and calling them a “fucking asshole.” Numerous participants described being “called names and sworn at in front of all the students.” Participants described the use of curse words as being used to cause emotional pain to the victim. There were a couple of instances of verbal assault that did not involve curse words. Survey Participant 9 described an altercation with a student who was throwing things in the classroom, stating,

I told a student to stop throwing things at other students or I would call the office and when he continued, I did page the office. When I told him to go to the office, I did not

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

believe he would, so I followed him out of the classroom. He was yelling at me in an extremely loud and rage-filled voice and told me to get back in the goddamned classroom and don't even think about following him. This was repeated many times.

Many of these stories of verbal assault lean very precariously close to verbal threats, which could be seen as related.

Verbal threats in this study are characterized as when the speaker proclaims an action they might take against a teacher verbally but does not execute it. For instance, a participant described an incident stating, "a child in grade 3 threatened to kill me several times because he did not like the song I chose." Another participant stated, "I was helping with safe grad, and one of the students accused me of choking them. They had gone to the bathroom and rubbed their neck to make it look like someone had choked them." This participant describes feelings of uneasiness about whether administrators or parents will believe the student's actions and feel unprotected in their career. Survey Participant 19 discussed incidents where they had been threatened by both students and parents stating,

I've had incidents at the junior high level where students have told me to 'fuck off or else,' and have gotten right up in my face and called me a 'fucking asshole,' and have threatened to report me for things I didn't do... and actually did report me (again, falsely) for supposedly being a racist and denying a student an opportunity because he was black. I've also had parents write posts in social media, not directly to me, but in parent forums accusing me of these types of supposed transgressions.

In this study, music educators often spoke of being threatened when they did not give a student a desired role in a school performance. Survey Participant 26 stated, "I have also had parents upset and threatening me because I did not give their child a special part or solo in concerts, or their

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

child was not given top music marks.” Another participant described an experience where a student threatened to slash their tires and asserted that they knew where the teacher lived. These incidents instill a sense of a lack of perceived safety and support that can lead to further issues within a class and sometimes potentially more severe incidents of violence.

Physical threats have been described by participants in this study as events where a student physically asserts themselves but does not make physical contact, usually in an attempt to intimidate the teacher. Survey Participant 12 described experiences of physical threats stating, “I had students charge at me and run full force towards me. Threaten me if I gave them poor marks. This was while I was teaching high school.” Survey Participant 22 described “students threateningly entering personal space.” Survey Participant 34 described an incident in a band class stating, “I had a student hold his clarinet over his head as if to throw it at me during one of my first years of teaching.” Focus Group Participant A described a student who had sexually assaulted multiple students in the school. When he was in their class, the teacher was required to have a walkie-talkie at all times; however, when he would physically get so close to the teacher that he was leaning across the desk at them, they would push the walkie-talkie button, and nobody would come to their aid. They stated,

I wasn't allowed to touch him. Now, I never would. But I wasn't allowed to put my hands out to distance myself from this student, so it put me in an uncomfortable situation because this student was like six foot five and 200 pounds, so he's almost a foot taller than I am... What do I do if he wants to do anything?

These music educators describe a perceived lack of safety and intimidation and allude to issues with support in their schools.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

One commonly mentioned form of violence was vandalism, which was often described as property damage, whether school property in a music classroom or personal property belonging to the music educator. Focus Group Participant A described an experience where students from another school used their music classroom as a changing room during a sporting event. They stated, “upon returning to my room, several ukuleles were destroyed, as well as boomwhackers being broken, and my smart board being affected (cords detached, pieces broken).” This teacher described dirty underwear left in her classroom and the strong smell of axe spray. Numerous participants described getting their tires slashed and their cars keyed. Some were acknowledged as targeted events, whereas others were more widespread instances where teachers from other subject areas also had cars that sustained damage. Survey Participant 12 stated, “I had students purposefully break things that belonged to the music program.” Survey Participant 25 discussed issues with students who were in distress and not able to self-regulate who would throw or break items in the music classroom stating, “as a result of incidents in music class, such as not wanting to participate, or feeling like they are being looked at by others, etc., they lashed out at me by throwing objects or hitting me.” Some of these teachers indicated that if these minor incidents were not adequately addressed, they often escalated to become more significant issues in the future.

Physical violence is the form of violence that is most talked about among all forms of violence. While it remained a prevalent issue in this study, it was not the most discussed or familiar form of violence, with verbal threats, property damage, and physical threats surpassing it in the survey. Many participants shared experiences of being hit by students with special needs. Survey Participant 6 described “being pushed by a student trying to leave the room.” This information does not negate the potential severity of physical violence against music educators.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

In contrast, Focus Group Participant D described an extreme circumstance where a parent came into the school to confront them about not featuring their child in a school concert. The parent in this situation backed the music teacher into a corner alone when they were in the music room. The vice-principal intervened when the music teacher could slowly make their way toward the school office. The vice-principal was thrown to the floor by the parent and injured, and the police had to intervene. This altercation ended in a court case. Many participants in this study discussed experiences with students throwing things at them in rage, including “handbells” from the music class, throwing chairs, flipping desks, and even having a portable whiteboard thrown at the teacher. Numerous participants also mentioned being hit or kicked by students with exceptionalities who could not self-regulate in their classes.

Another type of incident discussed frequently and should be mentioned is bullying amongst coworkers, students, and parents. Some of this bullying happened online on Facebook groups or online forums amongst parents, and others happened in the classroom in person. Focus Group Participant C mentioned a situation where a co-worker did not bring their students down to a choir rehearsal and was angry that they missed their prep period and were not reminded by the music educator. The participant stated, “she came down to my room, and she tore a strip up one side of me and down the other just to say, why didn’t you tell [me]... my class missed choir?” This teacher felt emotionally attacked and embarrassed that they had been reprimanded in front of a student. Focus Group Participant B discussed their experiences as a music substitute teacher, describing the trials of having students “trying to beat you into getting angry.” A couple of participants also mentioned students purposely making the teacher flustered and angry, then filming them unknowingly and sending footage to students around the school to laugh and make

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

fun of the teacher. Participants described feeling violated and nervous about the potential outcomes of being filmed against their will.

### **4.2.1.2 Incident Reporting.**

Of the incidents discussed in this study, only 57% of participants stated that they had reported being victimized. The qualitative approach to the study allowed for further exploration into why an incident may not have been reported. Most people who reported the incidents felt comfortable speaking with the administration or felt that the incident was severe enough to warrant reporting. Others felt the incident was not a big enough issue to deserve being reported or did not feel supported enough to report an incident. These incidents were also handled in different ways that either benefitted or negatively affected the victims. The way these reports were handled reflects the administration in a school and general school support.

There are numerous reasons why an incident may or may not have been reported. Several new teachers believed that their employment might be jeopardized if they reported any weakness in their teaching skills. Therefore, they did not report their victimizations. Without reporting an incident of violence, it is difficult for new teachers to get the guidance they need to help understand why an incident may have occurred and grow from this experience. Focus group participants discussed how it is crucial to report incidents so they can be recorded when resource allocations are re-evaluated at a school. Others stated that they did not know the perpetrator of the incident or could not prove it was a specific student because they did not see the incident occur (in a vandalism context). Other teachers spoke of the extra work involved in reporting an incident, including calling home to parents and filling out reports and did not want to lose time on other work they deemed more important. Some participants stated, "I took it as 'part of the job' in the age group I was working in (Jr. High). I also knew other teachers had similar

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

incidents, and nothing would come of it.” Survey Participant 23 expressed that they were embarrassed that the incident had occurred and did not report it due to embarrassment.

There was some deep discussion on how administrators, districts, unions, and victims handled the incidents. Focus Group Participant D stated, “I think that a lot of it is handled very very well” speaking positively about the hard work that their administrators put in with many instances of violence in their school. When faced with teacher-directed violence, participants discussed their immediate reactions. Survey Participant 25 said they “had to clear the classroom immediately to diffuse the situation.” They reacted quickly to prevent anyone, including themselves, from being seriously injured. Other participants reported experiencing emotional distress in the moment, with one stating, “I was very shaken, crying.” Focus Group Participant D discussed their experiences with a violent parent and acknowledged that the incident marked a significant shift in school security for their school. Cameras were installed, and locks were enforced on the doors, so parents could no longer walk into a school without the knowledge and permission of the office staff. In this instance, law enforcement was also involved.

In the instance where Focus Group Participant A had students break a ukulele and damage a smartboard in their classroom, their school was fully supportive and worked hard to ensure that the broken instruments could be replaced. However, where some of the instruments were not damaged beyond repair, the teacher was forced to keep using damaged instruments. In this example, the participant stated,

Their supervising teacher was the admin at their school who watched this all happen, said nothing, and there were no repercussions. Our school reached out. They did purchase one new ukulele for us, which was wonderful, but I still have several boomwackers that can’t be used because they’re cracked on the ends... It took several weeks to get my

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

smartboard fixed and the only thing that came of it was they (the students) were pulled from one tournament that they could play and there was no external [punishment]. No detention, no apology from the students. And I don't even believe that they need to have a punishment per se. But I believe that an apology should have happened. And they're not being held accountable for it.

This example indicates that while some administrators support teachers, not all schools and administrators react the same way to different examples of violence, making it difficult to anticipate what kind of support a teacher will receive in different school environments.

### **4.2.1.3 Incident Analysis.**

Students with exceptionalities have been an essential topic of discussion within this study. Many violent incidents occurred with students with exceptionalities, and participants reported limited resources to handle the situations. Survey Participant 14 stated, "it is a common occurrence when working with special needs students." A large number of the incidents of physical violence reported in this study occurred with students who had some form of exceptionality. Teachers reported sensory issues where sounds might trigger a student, and some students with these sensory issues were still required to stay in music class. Focus Group Participant B spoke admirably about their administration and support, except for students with exceptionalities. They said the administrators "are very reluctant to hand out suspensions for students with exceptionalities. It is not that I want the suspension to happen because those kids should be in school, but I fear for the safety of other students in the room." While administrators seem to be on the right track when handling instances of violence, some issues still need to be addressed.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

Participants in this study maintained empathy for the students who instigated these incidents of violence in their classrooms because many of them had come from complex backgrounds or had behavioural disorders. When participants were asked to analyze the incidents and discuss what might have led to the escalation, many participants responded similarly by describing “student frustration, lack of discipline at home maybe and issues which the students themselves were dealing with.” Survey Participant 18 described their students, stating they

have behavioural issues and our class sizes are so big that being lumped in with other students who have behavioural issues is unavoidable. These same students are basically in trouble with all their teachers, they also have no success or interest in school. Many of them come from troubled backgrounds and to exacerbate the issue, there are no consequences at our school, so they wander the halls aimlessly and get into stuff.

Many music educators in this study questioned whether students with exceptionalities were getting the appropriate level of support due to the number of violent events triggered by students with behavioural disorders or students who struggle in classroom settings.

The mental health of students was also raised as a concern by participants. They felt that students who had mental health issues that were being left unchecked may have led to instances of violence in their classroom. When asked to discuss potential causes of the incidents discussed by participants, many participants in the survey said things like “the student had mental health issues that were not being addressed” or “student mental health concerns, unconcerned principal.” Survey Participant 34 stated,

I do really worry about my students and their mental health. Some are not receiving any help and those who are likely need much more help than they are getting. I can see how

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

students get to breaking points, and it is frightening to me as a teacher to think about what could possibly happen.

Students come from a wide range of backgrounds, some more supportive than others. Students experiencing issues at home or suffering from chemical imbalances that could lead to mental health struggles often only get support from their school.

Some of the incidents reported by participants occurred partly because of issues with school safety. During the incident of the parent who attacked the teacher and vice-principal in the school, the school was not secure. The parent was able to enter the school through an unlocked door. The teacher also reported needing a P.A. system in their classroom to buzz the office for help. There were also no cameras in the building to identify an unknown person in the school. Since this incident occurred, safety protocols have been put in place to prevent these types of intrusions in future. Other participants also reported that while security systems are in place, many of the entryways to school buildings have not been maintained, with Focus Group Participant C stating, “in the playground, the kids can jimmy the door open. I have a key, but they always seem to be able to get in.”

Other than security, school buildings still have issues that affect school safety. Participant A stated in their school that, for “music, you have to leave the hallway, go through the gym, go through the cafeteria into the music room, so there’s no one to cover. There’s no one there to support if something happens.” Several participants mentioned being physically isolated from other classrooms because of the location of their teaching space. Because the music room is often set apart from other classrooms, there are often no other teachers nearby to help if a serious situation occurs in the music class. A couple of participants mentioned issues with P.A. systems or not having one, making it even more challenging to ask for help if needed. Another issue that

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

was raised is that music educators are expected to teach choir in schools and usually end up teaching an entire grade during one period, which could have over one hundred students in one classroom. Some participants reported being left alone in their music room with high numbers of students, making it challenging to maintain control over the space. On this topic, Participant C stated, “yeah, that’s 100 kids to one teacher though. Feels like this is a recipe for disaster.”

In analyzing the incident, a couple of participants discussed being inexperienced and not understanding the situation. Survey Participant 34 stated,

I did not take it seriously at the time. I didn’t feel as if the student was really going to follow through on the threat, but I also did not really know how to respond, as I had never experienced anything like that before, and was not trained on how to handle those situations. When I explained what had happened to my administration, they said it was completely unacceptable behaviour, got the parents on the phone right away, and suspended the student for his actions.

This teacher was unaware of how to handle the situation they faced and felt they needed more training to deal with it properly in the moment of the occurrence. Survey Participant 23 mentioned feeling like students were using the teacher’s inexperience against them, stating, “I was a young and inexperienced teacher and the students wanted to see what I would do I guess? They wanted to get on my nerves and see how I would handle it.”

Another issue that was mentioned in the study was the types of lesson plans left for substitute music teachers. Focus Group Participant B named them “YouTube lesson plans” where substitute teachers are left with a list of YouTube videos to show the students in the class. Often if a teacher is out sick for a more extended period, the YouTube playlist left for various

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

substitute teachers does not change, and new substitute teachers coming into the class do not know what the students have already watched. Focus Group Participant B asserted that,

the YouTube lesson plan has caused a lot of violence in the room because the kids feel like they can check out and then when those kids have behavioural disorders... I find those kids who really struggle with being in front of a screen, then really lash out.

While only some participants in this study were substitute music teachers, this potential issue is worth mentioning. YouTube is becoming a more commonly used tool in classrooms. While helpful, this suggests it may be relied upon too much and requires further study.

### ***4.2.2 The Aftermath of Violence Against Music Educators***

Participants who had experienced violence directed against them were asked to discuss their reactions to their experiences and how they felt about the incident immediately after and a few months/years after the event occurred. Participants spoke of their emotions, mental health, personal lives, and passion for their jobs. While some participants had no feelings of trauma following the experience and were able to move on with their regular lives, others seriously struggled with life afterwards.

#### **4.2.2.1 Emotional Responses.**

Many participants named strong emotions when asked how they felt after experiencing teacher-directed violence. Emotions that came up very frequently were fear, anxiety, stress, and anger. Survey Participant 20 stated, “I still remember the pit I felt in my stomach after having to enter the room with certain classes where the verbal abuse towards me was high and aggressive.” Other participants described feeling “violated” or “like a victim.” Focus Group Participant D describes feeling “traumatized, very shaken. I was picked up by my husband and cried uncontrollably for what seemed like hours. I felt unsafe and it was an awful feeling.” After being

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

threatened, having their car vandalized, and being unable to prove who was the culprit, Survey Participant 18 stated,

I have been anxious all year about teaching the grade sevens and since my vehicle was vandalized I've been physically sick from anxiety and sleepless over having to be in the classroom with those students that vandalized my vehicle and got away with it. I've been absent a lot.

Some participants found the fear and uncertainty of violence since their experience to be all-encompassing, and Survey Participant 19 described feeling

Just totally broken. Most days I could bravado through. But something about the real possibility of physical violence in the moment, and the fact that this student was just acting out her trauma in a way that had been essentially conditioned by the school, and the assumption that it was a natural part of my job as a teacher to be able to accept that and roll with it – just helpless, inadequate, worthless, never mind potentially unsafe.

These feelings of defeat and fear were echoed by participants who described similar feelings even years after the incident had occurred. Survey Participant 19 stated, “I continue to manage my anxiety and depression to this day.” Survey Participant 26 went as far as to say, “I always worry that students who did not like me as a teacher will come back to retaliate as adults or older teenagers. I always keep my address and phone number unlisted for this reason.” This level of long-term discomfort speaks of a deeper issue, which numerous participants in this survey have named: Mental Health.

### **4.2.2.2 Mental Health.**

As previously mentioned, mental health was a prominent discussion throughout this survey, whether amongst students or teachers. What was revealed through this study was that

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

while there are mental health tools available for educators, many do not know that it is available, it is expensive, and it has limits. While some participants reported experiencing no long-lasting effects following a traumatic incident, many suffered long after the incident had occurred.

Survey participant 35 stated,

After the incident I had to take approximately 10 days off work as I was traumatized... [he] lived on the same street as me and I lived in fear of him coming to my door... I locked my door at all times and did not leave my house for days. That experience has never quite fully left my mind, I am very sensitive to loud noises and slamming doors still. I would definitely say I have some lingering PTSD from this event

One participant stated, “this changed my life completely, I have had to give up teaching and had to seek out counselling from the NLTA. I was diagnosed with trauma and PTSD and this incident still affects me daily.” In the survey, many participants mentioned seeking aid for their mental health when discussing the aftermath of a violent incident. Survey Participant 22 stated, “after I stopped teaching that group and got counselling, I felt better.” However, the issue that came to light through this study was access to mental health resources. Firstly, the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District has a program called the “Employee Assistance Program” (EAP). Each teacher is offered a career allotment of \$3000 towards private counselling. It was just raised from \$2000 to \$3000 this past year. This program pays up to \$40 per hour of a session (Employee Assistance Program, 2022). This program can help with counselling, including marital issues, drug and alcohol abuse, and individual issues. This program is a step in the right direction; however, as acknowledged by participants in the focus group, this program pays \$3000 throughout a teacher’s entire career, which has significant

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

limitations. One participant in the focus group admitted to being told that they had already reached their limit and had only been teaching for two years. Focus Group Participant C stated, there's a cap on that too. Because modern advanced age, I've used it many times. And there's only a certain amount of money possible for your whole career... and it seems like these violent things are happening way more often and people are going to need a lot more help.

Participants also discussed how insurance helps cover some of the expenses of counselling to offset the rest of the leftover cost of the sessions. However, Focus Group Participant B acknowledged that health insurance is much more expensive for substitutes. In some cases, the insurance expense is prohibitive, with some participants stating, "it's ridiculously prohibitively expensive as \$200... a month to buy." Some new substitute teachers are unaware that they can also source other health insurance options from other companies and feel that their only choice is a more expensive insurance plan through the school district or none. Focus Group Participant B mentioned finding another insurance plan through a different company for half the cost of the plan promoted through the district. Focus group participants also acknowledged the lack of awareness that there were aids available for teachers. Focus Group Participant B stated they were unaware of the EAP program until a friend in the healthcare system told them. Focus Group Participant A mentioned that they were informed of the program through a family member, indicating an issue with its visibility. Focus Group Participant C discussed another free program called "Doorways" where students and teachers can avail of free one-session counselling virtually or in person, depending on your location (Bridge the gapp, 2022). Focus Group Participant C said that their school had a Doorways office in the basement, which made it

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

particularly easy for teachers and students to avail of counselling if they were having a particularly challenging day.

### **4.2.2.3 Passion, Desensitization, and Thoughts of Leaving the Profession.**

In the aftermath of experiencing teacher-directed violence in their music classrooms, specific personal responses reported by participants affected their careers. Participants described feelings of isolation and desensitization, with Survey Participant 23 stating, “I buried the incident deep it seems.” Survey Participant 20 stated,

I’ve become desensitized to it over the past 10 years to the point that I will at times ignore the verbal abuse for the sake of the rest of the class having their entire music time wasted. The students within these homeroom classes have to live with being exposed to these verbally/physically abusive children for the full school day while my time is limited to 30min timeframes.

Participants described keeping their heads down and ignoring their trauma, with Survey Participant 24 stating, “I kept to myself and worked,” which could increasingly create isolation in the profession. By closing themselves off and pushing through, some educators ended up experiencing difficulty later in their professions, associating work with negativity and battling mental health struggles. Other teachers also mentioned ignoring teacher-directed abuse in the classroom so as not to disrupt the class.

Other teachers discussed a loss of passion with Survey Participant 40, stating, “my confidence and love for teaching slowly began to disappear.” Numerous participants mentioned thinking about changing schools or already having done so to feel safer and more supported in their careers. Survey Participant 19 stated,

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

when I returned from that year, the in-your-face verbal abuse triggered another incident, a relapse of anxiety/depression, and a half a year off. I found a new position at a new school – If I hadn't, I would've left teaching entirely.

Survey Participant 9 stated, "I refused to teach in a high school or junior high for two full years due to these incidents. I just returned this semester to high school but still do not intend to return to junior high." This teacher experienced enough of a triggering experience that they felt they could not return to teach an entire age group of students. Other participants discussed having thoughts of leaving the profession entirely. Survey Participant 12 stated,

I have my doubts of continuing on as an educator, frightened that this will occur again. I am not in a permanent position yet, so I am worried about what students I will encounter next fall. If I will be in a similar stressful situation.

In the focus group discussion, Focus Group Participant D stated,

I almost walked away from teaching. You know, it was six months into my career. I only had a year and I looked at my mom who had a thirty yearlong teaching career and I said, 'Mom, I have to do this for even five years? I can't do this job.'

Many teachers who talked of leaving the profession were younger teachers who were faced with teacher-directed violence early on and questioned whether it was worth continuing in the teaching profession due to the threat of future violence.

### ***4.2.3 Music Educators' Perceived Support Following a Violent Incident.***

There are many different types of support that a music educator could experience in a school. Without supports within the music classroom, the school community, administration, and co-workers, working as a music educator can become a very difficult undertaking, and can potentially lead to violence.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

### **4.2.3.1 Classroom Support.**

In the music classroom, participants reported various levels of support from student assistants for students with exceptionalities. Survey Participant 6 stated, “the student assistant sits at another table away from the student they are there for. They help or intervene when needed.” Survey Participant 9 stated,

This support does exist in the current classroom I am in, but did not exist in the junior high I was in. Currently there are student assistants with the high needs children and I do not have to monitor or deal with their behaviour. Also, when there have been issues with my own students the admin dealt with it promptly. I feel supported where I am.

This participant indicated that while they feel supported in their current school, the support could have worked more effectively in their previous school, indicating a lack of consistency between schools. Survey Participant 34 discussed issues with student assistant allotment stating,

I have a student assistant present just a few times a cycle with students in three separate classes. I really appreciate the support of having the student assistant present, and I know we are severely lacking in student assistant time. Any additional support for students with exceptionalities comes from me, and is dependent on how much attention I am able to give those students versus the classroom management and academic needs of the other students in the class.

The focus group portion of this study discussed the issue of insufficient in-class teacher support resources. Focus Group Participant B stated,

It got to the point where this particular school went through a separate bursary program not funded through the school district through an indigenous affairs group to get a full-time student assistant for one of its students... so they actually funded someone's student

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

assistant salary through this thing so that they can get that child proper support because they just didn't have enough bodies.

This statement indicated that schools have to seek external funding to source support for their schools because they are not getting enough funding from the government or school district.

Focus Group Participant B also stated,

A lot of the schools in St. John's have an insufficient allotment for student assistants or IRT, so one particular class, I had an IRT with me at all times and I had a student assistant with me at all times, and then I would get a reading specialist for one hour of the five hours a day, and what would happen is one kid is behavioural defiant. So you would tell him yes, he'd say no, and he'd run out of the room. And there was the first support [gone]. The second kid was autistic and violent, and he'd flip a desk and have to be removed from the setting. So there goes your IRT. The third kid would then get up and scream, and then punch another kid, and then there you go. There's your last support gone? Yeah, there's still three more kids who have severe needs. And so what I found is, it's always that whatever happens, you always lose support.

Other participants spoke of the fact that schools in Newfoundland and Labrador are given their allotment for classroom support based on the number of students in a school rather than the number of students with exceptionalities. Some schools desperately need more support to address all their needs in a building fully. Another participant mentioned the need for more support in the school regarding non-core subject areas, stating that some of the support would be removed from a music class to support a student in a core subject area during that period. Focus Group Participant A stated,

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

Our grade two/three class has two students with, I'll say severe exceptionalities. One is legally blind and the other one has... I don't even know what his situation is but he needs a student assistant at all times. So typically when they come to music, they lose one of their student assistants. So they come in with one student assistant, and typically that student assistant sits on their phone... and it's not that I don't feel like I should be the one keeping the class in order, but I don't feel like the support people feel like they need to support the students when they come to my class. I feel like they take it as a break.

This statement suggests that music educators may receive a lower level of classroom support than core subject areas in some schools. Without the classroom support required in music class, it is challenging for educators to accomplish anything during class, and it heightens the risk of violence in the music classroom.

### **4.2.3.2 Administrator Support.**

An administrator is crucial in creating a healthy school environment; without that support, some educators can crumble under pressure. In this study, many people indicated that they felt supported by their administration, while a few indicated issues. Survey Participant 9 stated, "I feel supported where I am," and Survey Participant 13 stated, "the admin would have my back with discipline issues." Participant 34, an inexperienced teacher at the time of this story, mentioned speaking with their administrator after a particular incident stating,

I did not take it too seriously at the time. I didn't feel as if the student was really going to follow through on the threat, but I also did not really know how to respond, as I had never experienced anything like that before, and was not trained on how to handle those situations. When I explained what had happened to my administration, they said it was

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

completely unacceptable behaviour, got the parents on the phone right away, and suspended the student for his actions.

The administrator in this situation stepped up. They helped to act as a guide for this young teacher during one of their first experiences with violence. Other administrators mentioned by participants could have been more effective in their guidance, making them feel uncomfortable and ineffective. Survey Participant 18 stated, “I didn’t get any support from the admin or district.” Survey Participant also described dealing with an “unconcerned principal.”

Another teacher spoke about issues with administrative support following a violent incident. Focus Group Participant A described an incident where a student took a large xylophone and threw it at them, hitting them in the chest. There was significant discomfort after the incident, so the participant went to the hospital to get an X-Ray. The administrator asked them to take a sick day, and when the participant protested using one to get an X-Ray for a workplace incident, the administrator said, “well you know, you don’t have to take time off.” The participant responded by saying, “I’m not losing days because I’m hurt, I’ll lose sick days because I’m sick” stating there should be a different type of leave to take if they have been hurt at work. The administrator did not provide that teacher with the option to file a workplace health and safety incident and made the teacher take some of their limited sick time to get an x-ray done. That administrator did not appropriately handle this particular incident. However, it is an example of how in different schools, violent incidents are handled differently by administrators, leading teachers to feel that they have different levels of support from one school to another.

### **4.2.3.3 Community Support.**

Without the community’s support, teachers can find increased targeted violence and issues with day-to-day life. Numerous music educators spoke of instances of online bullying.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

However, cyberbullying was not selected in any surveys, which may indicate a lack of understanding of cyberbullying. Participants who felt supported in their schools indicated that the school community had a role in this support. Survey Participant 29 indicated, “my support from my admin, other teachers and parents come from outside the classroom.” However, a lack of support within the community often seemed to occur online for participants. Survey Participant 19 stated, “the parent group posts on social media were the inciting trigger for a crisis-level panic incident.” Survey Participant 22 stated,

I’ve had incidents at the junior high level... [threaten] to report me for things I didn’t do... I’ve also had parents write posts in social media, not directly to me, but in parent forums, accusing me of these types of supposed transgressions.

In these situations, parent forums seem to be where parents feel they can openly express their feelings about specific teachers, which can have damaging effects on the mental health, reputation, and careers of the teachers in question.

One music educator also spoke of needing more support within the music community because they were not a certified music specialist even though they were in a music teaching position. Focus Group Participant A stated,

when there are positions that require classroom, music, and French... you’re not going to find someone with all three, it doesn’t really exist, but I’m in the music teachers Facebook group for Newfoundland, and I feel so unwelcome in that group. Every comment you see is like, oh, there’s an untrained teacher in this position at this school, and I should have had that position... I’ve reached out multiple times about professional learning sessions that have been offered within that group and people have said, ‘oh yes, we’ll send you that recording,’ and they don’t and when I reach out... looking for that

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

recording, they say ‘oh, well you’re not a music teacher. You’re a classroom teacher in a music position so we actually can’t send that to you.’

This teacher expressed feeling incredibly isolated and unable to grow in their teaching position because the music education community was unwilling to help them out.

### **4.2.3.4 School Support.**

The support a music educator receives in a school could make the difference between experiencing teacher-directed violence and not, and how the school handles the violent incident can also rewrite the narrative lived by the victim. Many participants in this study felt supported by their schools. Some talked about how some of the support helped prevent violent incidents. Since their experience with violence, Survey Participant 26 stated, “if I have to meet with a parent face to face, I make sure there is another colleague close by.” This strategy helps to ensure there is another witness to any altercations that could ensue and someone to help diffuse a situation before it could escalate. Survey Participant 29 discussed their support system in their school, stating, “my support from my admin, other teachers, and parents, comes from outside the classroom” indicating that if they needed anything, they would have an entire school community to help them. While some participants voiced similar feelings, others felt more isolated within their school with less support.

Some music educators in this survey mentioned that sometimes they feel that their colleagues resent them. In schools, music educators are expected to put off school assemblies and performances. Because of these events, they may be required to remove some students from their classes to partake in the preparations. Other classroom teachers are sometimes asked to spend their prep periods in the gymnasium (or wherever the school assembly is happening) to supervise the students. Survey Participant 23 stated, “Teachers have some negative things to say

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

about concerts and assemblies. Too much time is taken for them. Too many responsibilities given to them as classroom teachers.” Survey Participant 17 mentioned not feeling like they could talk to their school community about their victimization because “other teachers had similar incidents, and nothing would come of it.”

### **4.2.3.5 Respect.**

While not explicitly asked about in the questions within this study, respect is a recurring topic that requires discussion. Many music educators in this study indicated a lack of respect from their school community, administration, district, and students. There are different levels to this lack of respect. Some of these feelings came from students not respecting their teacher. However, many came from parents and staff not seeing music as an essential subject, viewing music educators as less educated or capable than their coworkers, and not seeing their value within a school environment.

There is a stigma that music is less crucial than many other subjects in the school curriculum; however, music has been linked to student success in education, increasing creativity, imagination, and student retention (Harris, 1956). Music is also used to build social skills and a sense of community and can even be used as a method of pain management (LaGass & Thaut, 2012). While numerous studies have been done on the benefits of music in the classroom, music educators constantly have to advocate for their programs. Within this study, some teachers provided examples of this stigma and connected it to how these opinions led to instances of violence in their music rooms. Focus Group Participant A stated, “I remember my first day on the job... I walked into that grade four or five class and one of the kids looked at me and said, ‘Miss, did you take this job because it’s music and you don’t have to do much?’” This participant discussed that when children have opinions like this, they often mirror what their

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

parents have said, which indicates a deeper and more systemic issue with the lack of respect for music and how this disrespect is being passed down to children. Focus Group Participant C spoke of the incident where their co-worker got angry at them for missing their choir prep period stating, “that really upset me that a teacher would think so little of me and what I was doing... that’s just showing that the music teacher is not always thought of as... doing anything important.” Focus Group Participant C also discussed their experiences teaching choir in their elementary school. Often, teachers view choir as a prep period and drop their students off to the music teacher, who ends up being responsible for multiple classes of students at once with no support. Focus Group Participant C stated, “They were just dropping them and gone... I just said no, I’m not doing this unless there’s somebody in the room with me. This is crazy... You know what it’s like. You’ve got... 80-100 kids.” Having that number of children in one space with only one teacher significantly increases the risk of issues arising in the music space. Putting music educators in a position where they cannot effectively do their job also increases the risk of violent incidents in the music classroom. Other participants commented that their staff did not view their opinions or observations as valuable. Focus Group Participant A discussed an incident where they saw some significant behavioural issues within a student, suggesting that they might need to be assessed for an exceptionality. They stated,

So I’ve sat down with our administration, and our vice-principal is one of our IRTs, and I’ve sat down with our guidance counselor about this student and said... I need to get him tested [because] he has no life skills... he learned how to tie his shoes for the first time this year at 13... and I said I need him to get tested, we need to reach out to his mom, we need to see if we can get this to go. And both of them looked me straight in the face and said ‘he’s not on the spectrum. There’s no way he’s on the spectrum. He’s a completely

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

typically developing child.’ And one of the IRTs who has never come upstairs and has never seen him in class, and the guidance counselor... says no... And because I’m considered the music teacher, I think it’s a part of it. I don’t have the typical skills of a teacher in the classroom... but also because our IRT who’s never seen him in the classroom says no... He’s not getting tested, so he has no support.

Focus Group Participant C discussed how they felt they were not seen as an equal member of their staff stating,

We’re not looked at that way... and that’s wrong. Music is such an important part of a child’s brain, of growing up, and all your development, and it helps in so many other ways too. It’s just so important and to not be considered an equal teacher is something that’s just wrong, and really a form of violence too.

Other music educators spoke of the additional work they took on not to bother other staff in their school. Focus Group Participant C also discussed the fact that music educators are expected to put off multiple school concerts per year. These expectations mean that on top of their regular classroom time, they have to have rehearsals for different ensembles during prep periods, before school, lunches, and after school. They stated, “It’s too much to ask.” Focus Group Participant D added to this statement stating, “Just the fact that maybe some of us are already worn down [because] we don’t get a break... smaller things can be even more stressful.” This lack of respect can also be viewed as a potential cause for violence in the music room. After their classroom was vandalized, Focus Group Participant A stated, “I expect an apology. I expect students to realize what they did, and the fact that their [administrator] was there and saw what happened and still doesn’t care is shocking.” When children believe they can get away with delinquent behaviour in a classroom, they may continue to escalate their behaviour. By not supporting music educators,

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

all the benefits of music education in schools are lost because music educators are now just trying to stay safe in their classrooms.

### ***4.2.4 The Prevention of Violence Against Music Educators***

During this study, participants discussed ways in which the violence they had experienced could have been prevented or how things could be changed to improve things in the future. Most of these suggestions were specifically for classroom layout or teacher training.

#### **4.2.4.1 Classroom Layout.**

The layout of a music classroom can set a teacher up for success or make teaching very difficult for the music educator. Participants in this study discussed what they loved about their classrooms and what could be changed to improve the setup to decrease the risk of violence in the music classroom.

Firstly, I hypothesized that the music classroom layout could negatively affect behaviours in the classroom and potentially lead to violence. Participants confirmed this theory by discussing why specific incidents occurred or escalated because of the layout of the music classroom. Many participants loved their classroom setups, describing bright open spaces with lots of room to move around and practical storage for instruments. Participants who described having these types of setups in the survey portion of the study often coincided with experiencing little to no violence in their classrooms.

Several participants who experienced behavioural or violent classroom incidents also described issues with their classroom layouts. In music class, students are often expected to move around, especially in younger age groups. Open spaces aid in creating a highly effective setup for music classes for this reason. Survey Participant 22 stated, “the majority of classrooms I teach in require significantly more physical distance so that children do not bump into one

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

another, often causing chain reactions that lead to classroom violence.” Survey Participant 17 added to this concept stating, “the students may have had better behaviour if they were spaced out from each other and used the seating plan.” Many other participants spoke of the effectiveness of a seating plan in a music classroom. In a regular classroom, students often have a seating plan. When they leave their classes and go to less structured rooms, such as music, the lack of organization can lead to students sitting next to other students, which might trigger negative behaviours. Providing students with strategically planned seating guidelines can help prevent triggering situations.

The location of the music classroom can create issues for the prevention of violence. Often music classrooms are located in more isolated parts of a school. Focus Group Participant A said their classroom was on the opposite end of their school, away from other classrooms. They described having to walk through the cafeteria to get there. Sometimes when a violent incident occurs, a teacher might ask for help from another nearby teacher if they are waiting for the help of an administrator. When the music classroom is located in an isolated part of the school building, there are fewer people around to ask for help.

Specific technological needs were mentioned for some teachers in their music classrooms. In most schools, each classroom is equipped with a Public Address (PA) system that allows a teacher to page the office and ask for help. This system can be used for many different purposes during a school day. For instance, if a child spills food and the custodian is needed, if an administrator needs a child to come down to the office, or if there is a secure school or lockdown, the PA can be used. In some external spaces in a school, such as a cafeteria or music classroom, there may not be a PA system or the system may be mounted in the ceiling and meant for one-way correspondence only. This inaccessibility makes contacting the office impossible in

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

specific locations of the school. Focus Group Participant 35 stated, “I would like to have access to a phone and/or intercom closer to the door I use the most... there is no cell service in my classroom so I have thought before if I needed help it could involve having to run to the office.” Participants also mentioned classroom layouts accommodating where the PA system is to ensure easy access. Some participants also mentioned the need for cameras in or near their classrooms. In some schools, there are camera systems throughout the building; however, this is not the case in every school, and if there are, they are not always in the most strategic places for the music classroom. Cameras can be helpful for the administrator to view an incident occurring or look back after an event such as a theft and see who the potential culprits are, for example.

Storage was another issue that multiple participants within the study mentioned. Music teachers often have many instruments and teaching tools in their classrooms. These instruments take up a significant amount of space and could be a significant distraction, or worse, during a music class. Survey Participant 34 stated, “there are many things that could be thrown/damaged if a student were to have a violent outburst, but storage space is at a minimum in terms of keeping everything out of sight.” Looking back at previous incidents in this study, Focus Group Participant A had a student throw a xylophone at them, and Survey Participant 25 had a student throw a portable whiteboard at them. Focus Group Participant A also had many instruments damaged by students who were in their classroom outside of school hours. If those items had been stored out of sight, those incidents of violence would not have occurred. When discussing the concept of respect, Focus Group Participant A mentioned that all classroom teachers were provided with bookcases and shelving units at their school. In contrast, the music teacher was not afforded the same resources. While a music classroom may not have a built-in storage closet, additional storage units or bookshelves are a simple solution to ensuring instruments are out of

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

sight and protected. Aside from the risk of an instrument being thrown or used to hurt someone, instruments are expensive. When broken or stolen, they may not be replaced or repaired due to a lack of funding. Using storage to keep these instruments out of sight protects them from potential vandalism or theft.

Schools often have limited space, so classrooms are sometimes used for multiple purposes. The music classroom in many schools is often used in many ways outside of the music subject area. Music teachers often have to teach in the cafeteria or gymnasium, where their instruments and other equipment are stored alongside food canisters or basketballs, which could easily fall on or damage the music equipment. Sometimes music classrooms are also used for after-school programs or other courses, requiring sharing storage or having instruments exposed to students and teachers who may have little regard for the value of the equipment in the space. Survey Participant 8 suggested “having the room designated for music, and not also art and a meeting space for individuals at the school” to prevent violence such as property damage or theft.

### **4.2.4.2 Teacher Training.**

Participants heavily discussed teacher training as a potential preventative measure to use in cases of violence. Many participants felt they did not have the proper training to handle violent incidents in the classroom, which led to feelings of fear and discomfort in the workplace. Survey Participant 14 stated, “I have experienced some anxiety when working with students in the pervasive needs unit as I am not trained in CPI (Crisis Prevention and Intervention), so I cannot defend myself in any way if a student becomes violent towards me.” Focus Group Participant D felt strongly about CPI training and stated, “I think that crisis intervention training, I did it, should be available to everybody.” Focus Group Participant C mentioned doing a course

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

called “Relationships First<sup>4</sup>,” which is based on restorative justice, where teachers are taught how to guide “conversations between students, but let them lead it.” Focus group Participant B mentioned that as a substitute teacher, they cannot avail themselves of any in-school professional development opportunities because they are not technically part of a staff, and schools do not offer PDs to substitute teachers. As a music specialist, Focus Group Participant C talked about an incident where they were interested in taking a PD in Relationships First that was being offered at their school but were denied by their administrator. They stated,

we were having a staff meeting and one of the principals said, ‘okay, I need some volunteers who want to take the Relationships First Training,’ and I put my hand up and said ‘yeah, that’s what I really want to learn more about,’ and they said ‘no, I only need a classroom teacher.’ I wasn’t allowed to go to that training because I wasn’t a classroom teacher, which was really... upsetting to me.

Participants of the focus group had an in-depth discussion on teacher training before entering the workforce and their perceived readiness for managing challenging situations in the teaching profession. Focus Group Participant B stated, “I found a lot of the courses just didn’t prepare me for the real world.” One course specifically discussed was the “Exceptionalities” course offered at Memorial University of Newfoundland. Through this course, teachers in training were provided with the names and definitions of various exceptionalities. However, they were not given tools to use for real-life interactions with students with these exceptionalities. Focus Group Participant B stated, “I know we have that exceptionalities course and all these things, but that exceptionalities course is just one course, and it gives you nothing. It was a waste

---

<sup>4</sup> Vaandeering, D. (n.d.). *The Philosophy*. Relationships First NL. Retrieved on November 27, 2022, from <https://www.relationshipsfirstnl.com/about> : A teacher training course

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

of my time, and stuff like that is [available] on the internet.” The participants in the focus group discussed their internships and how the internship could potentially be adjusted to better prepare new educators for being on their own. Focus group participants acknowledged that things have changed since the Pandemic’s start. Since the teacher shortage began, schools have had to open their doors to the “emergency supply list,” where student teachers or teachers with less than a level three teaching certificate can substitute for a regular classroom teacher in a school (Hiring of Substitutes, 2022). With the emergency supply list, student teachers who had not yet finished their program could teach unsupervised in schools. Participants in the focus group wondered if being put in solo teaching situations while still in an education program might be a beneficial opportunity so that student teachers could have the opportunity to unpack specific incidents with their professors and grow from those individual experiences. Focus Group Participant A suggested, “they’re getting their feet wet, and they’re seeing what’s in there before they’re responsible for the group [long-term].” They also mentioned that in their internship, their supervising teacher gave them lots of opportunities to teach the class; however, not all internships work out that way stating, other interns

had all that support from their mentor teacher, so they didn’t deal with a lot of the issues, and in doing that, then when they get tossed into a classroom of their own, a little fire starts and all of a sudden, it’s a wildfire because they don’t know how to put it out.

Focus Group Participant B disagreed with allowing interns to substitute teach stating,

I would agree in some ways it’s beneficial, but I think it furthers to violence in a lot of ways because if one of those students who hadn’t finished a degree ended up at some of the schools I go to, they are at significant risk for very dangerous harm.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

Focus group participants also discussed the possibility of breaking up an internship into multiple teaching areas or schools with different socio-economic statuses. For instance, if an intern had an internship at a school with a high socio-economic status, an excellent music program, and unlimited resources, they may be at a disadvantage if they were to then go to a school with higher needs and fewer resources. Focus Group Participant A spoke of their experiences with their internship stating, “You need to spend a good bit of time in different schools instead of spending a long time in one because you get so comfortable with those students and with exactly what their needs are, you don’t see that spectrum of students you could end up with.”

During the focus group, participants also discussed the benefits of working with external programs such as the Boys and Girls Club or Choices for Youth, especially during music education training. Two of the participants in this study had experience working or volunteering for groups such as these. They spoke of how much it helped prepare them for the classroom.

Focus Group Participant A stated,

I did a placement with Street Reach in St. John’s, which [involves] marginalized youth who have dropped out of school and are coming back because they want to get their education... When I went, there was four of us and there were eight students I think, ranging from 14 up to 20... I was paired with two that had charges on them for violence or sexual misconduct... and I went into it petrified knowing what I was going to deal with. But it also taught me how to make those relationships, and I wouldn’t know how to make relationships the way I do if I hadn’t had that experience with them... If I didn’t have that experience before I got hit with the xylophone, I would have reacted in a different way. I took the xylophone and sat down with student, and we had a conversation about what happened instead of just losing my utter mind, which is what I wanted to do.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

Because of these highly supervised experiences with external outreach programs, various participants stated they were better equipped to understand the variety of needs that exist with the variety of students that a teacher works with within a day. They were given hands-on guidance on handling difficult situations when presented with them. Focus Group Participant B stated, “you definitely face those adverse circumstances to some degree, but it’s in a much safer environment than when you’re in a classroom alone with thirty kids.”

### **4.2.4.3 Summary.**

In this phenomenological study, music educators guided me through their shared experiences with teacher-directed violence. Through the analysis of the personal experiences of participants, I assessed variables within a school and community environment which could affect the risk of violence towards a music educator and what factors could contribute to or diminish the adverse effects that these experiences could have on a music educator’s mental and physical health. Through the survey and focus group, the participants directed me toward the following themes:

- the experience of violence against music educators
- the aftermath of violence against music educators
- music educators’ perceived support following a violent incident
- the prevention of violence against music educators

These music educators provided excellent resources for future consideration. Their experiences with this phenomenon gave direct insight into the issues music educators face today, providing precise representations of the phenomenon of violence against music educators and ways in which their experiences could be improved.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

### 5.1 Summary of findings

Through this study, I set out to find out what classroom music educators' experiences were with teacher-directed violence, and what could be done to help mitigate or prevent these incidents in future. By conducting a mixed-methods study using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), I was able to hear stories of lived experiences from classroom music educators from across the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Through the analysis of the data uncovered, I established four emergent themes, which I will provide a more detailed analysis of in this chapter. The themes that will be discussed are:

- the experience of violence against music educators
- the aftermath of violence against music educators
- music educators' perceived support following a violent incident
- the prevention of violence against music educators

Participants who had experienced the phenomenon gave detailed recounts on their experiences with teacher-directed violence, and it was clear that they wanted their stories to be heard and accurately portrayed. Participants described experiencing many forms of violence with stories ranging from being verbally assaulted by students and co-workers, to being hit with a large xylophone. Participants discussed struggles with mental health after their victimization and various levels of support they received from their co-workers and administration, which affected their healing process after the event. Participants listed mental health resources that exist for educators such as the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and Doorways, however, acknowledged that many of them did not know where to go to seek help and were directed towards these resources from sources outside of the school system. Lastly, participants made

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

suggestions for ways in which teacher-directed violence could be prevented in future, with additional teacher training and classroom supports being strongly recommended. Throughout this chapter, I will examine the themes that arose through this study, analyze my procedure, and compare the data to pre-existing literature.

### **5.2 Phase One: Quantitative Data**

Participants' educational and professional backgrounds were recorded, along with the regions in which they taught. Afterwards, a definition of violence was provided to participants that aligned with the definitions of violence created by Espelage et al. (2013), McMahon et al. (2019), and Wilson, Douglas, and Lyon (2011), before they completed the rest of the survey. Of the 49 participants, 59% (Approximately 29 participants) stated that they had been a victim of teacher-directed violence in their career. McMahon et al. (2014) state that 80% of teachers in k-12 schools reported experiencing some form of violence in a year, which is a significantly higher statistic than the one I found through this study. People who chose to participate in this study may have also been incentivized because of previous encounters with violence. Therefore, the statistic could be skewed; however, even outside of this study, it is still a tangible statistic for music educators across the province. Of the participants who had experienced violence, "verbal threats" was the category where participants reported the highest percentage of incidents. Later in the study, some participants discussed being verbally threatened and victimized later by the same students who had given the threats, which indicates that verbal threats, if not taken seriously, can contribute to higher risks of future violent incidents. As mentioned in Chapter 4, interestingly, three participants did not indicate that they had been victims of teacher-directed violence and then selected that they had experienced property damage, verbal threats, and theft.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

Perhaps they did not consider these incidents violent despite the definition provided at the beginning of the survey, and perhaps they did not want to see themselves as victims.

### **5.3 Phase Two: Qualitative Data**

#### ***5.3.1 Reflections on Themes***

##### **5.3.1.1 The experience of violence against music educators.**

Most research on violence against educators speaks of the experiences of classroom teachers or special education professionals; however, this study is the first of its kind that I am aware of that focuses directly on music educators. This theme can be divided into three subsections: what violence against music educators can look like, the reporting of the incident, and incident analysis. Within this theme, music educators described their experiences with teacher-directed violence in their music classrooms.

Music educators within this study reported experiencing verbal assault, verbal threats, physical threats, physical assault, vandalism, and bullying. Verbal assault in the context of this study was when participants felt verbally attacked, such as having curse words used against them. Verbal threats were primarily verbal descriptions of actions that an aggressor could take against the teacher but did not in that specific scenario. Physical threats were when the aggressor would move to harm a teacher physically but then refrain while instilling fear in the victim. Participants described in-depth their experiences with being threatened, injured, made to feel unsafe or unsupported and damage done to their school or personal possessions. These stories helped to create a realistic portrayal of what the phenomenon of teacher-directed violence can look like within the profession of music education.

Within this study, it was established that only 57% of incidents of teacher-directed violence were reported. Participants who reported the incidents felt supported by their

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

administration or that the incident was severe enough to merit reporting. Participants who chose not to report the incident did so for many reasons. Some participants indicated a lack of perceived support from the administration or had seen other coworkers go through similar experiences with virtually no repercussions. Participants with minimal work experience, who were in replacement positions, or who were substitute teachers often felt they needed more job security to voice a concern or show that they could not handle their classes. Some inexperienced teachers spoke to the administration after an incident thinking it was not a big deal, only to learn from the administrator that it did merit reporting and needed to be properly handled. A substitute teacher participant stated that they feared they would get “blacklisted” from schools if they showed any weakness in their teaching. This statement is unfortunate because, in this study, it was also indicated that substitute teachers are often disadvantaged because of the types of lesson plans left behind for them and their lack of intimate knowledge of the needs of individual students in their classrooms. Some participants in this study who did report their incidents of teacher victimization received unsatisfactory responses from their administration or external resources. Focus Group Participant A mentioned that while their administration tried their best to handle the incident of classroom vandalism, the administration of the other school involved did not respond accordingly, and the students responsible did not face repercussions. While some instruments were replaced, others remained permanently damaged.

After speaking about their victimization, participants reflected on what might have caused the violence and how it was handled. As music educators, participants described school-wide issues such as a lack of resources as an issue, and others described other core subject areas being prioritized for classroom support. Students with exceptionalities were a big topic of conversation within this study. Some participants indicated that, in some cases, music could be a

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

trigger for a child who might have issues with noises, or a student who is prone to throwing things might have difficulty in a classroom where instruments are out in the open. Espelage et al. (2013) indicate that students with behaviour issues may have triggers to watch for that can help prevent issues of violence. If certain students are known to have issues with loud noises for example, precautions should be put in place to help prevent triggering situations from occurring. Some participants stated there were not enough student assistants or instructional resource teachers available in their school for the needs of the students in the building. Some participants indicated incidents of student assistants being removed from the music classroom because they were seen as more needed in other subject areas. Other participants mentioned that additional classroom teachers viewed music class as a break and did not work with their assigned students during music class. The mental health of students was also raised as a significant concern by participants who expressed the need for more guidance counsellors in schools to help with the emotional needs of students.

Classroom layout was also an essential topic of discussion within this study. Participants reported their classrooms being isolated from other parts of the school, making it difficult to get help quickly if needed. Other participants indicated issues with sharing their spaces or teaching out of a cafeteria, library, or gymnasium, creating new hazards of additional supplies within reach of students and a heightened risk of damaging musical instruments and other resources. Participants mentioned issues with technology, including needing a working PA system in their classroom and no cell service or WIFI, therefore no way to call for help. The size of their music classrooms was also frequently discussed, with indications that larger, open spaces with good sightlines reduced the risk of violence. Through this study, it was established that music educators face unique challenges because of the layouts of their classrooms. Bauer (2001)

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

indicates numerous issues pertaining to classroom layout that could lead to behavioural issues such as class sizes or a change in classroom structure from a student's regular classroom layout. Unlike classroom teachers, music classrooms usually do not have desks and require large open space to encourage movement and improve sightlines. When these spaces are shared with others, or do not allow for the space required, incidents of property damage, vandalism, and physical violence are more likely to occur.

### **5.3.1.2 The aftermath of violence against music educators.**

Because the literature on violence against educators indicates the potential for an array of physical and mental responses following victimization, it is no surprise that music educators shared these responses. When asked to describe how they felt following an experience with violence, the responses were understandably entirely negative, with common emotions resembling fear and anger. Some participants voiced fears of students "coming back to retaliate as adults," indicating a long-lasting and recurring thought process for the victim. Other participants described feelings of inadequacy, with one participant feeling "just totally broken" following a violent incident. The negative feelings reported within the study were often linked to issues with mental health among the participants.

Mental health was a significant point of discussion within this study, and participants provided insight into many resources that exist but may not be widely known. Participants discussed living with trauma, taking time off work, and being diagnosed with PTSD following victimization. In their 2007 study, Daniels et al. focus heavily on the mental health of educators, indicating that teachers are at risk for psychological trauma following a violent incident if they do not receive support. Participants described feelings of sensitivity to loud noises and having nightmares. In the focus group, when discussing their challenges with mental health after a

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

violent event, participants spoke of different resources that they availed of in the aftermath, including the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and Doorways.

The EAP is a program funded through the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association and the provincial government and assists employees who need counselling. The program provides \$40 per hour towards private counselling sessions up to a maximum of \$3000 during one's career (Employee Assistance Program, 2022). Because of an increased need for mental health services in the province, the number was increased from \$2000. The EAP is intended to be used as a subsidy alongside health insurance. For instance, in the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District, the group insurance is Johnson's, which offers \$1600 per year towards working with a psychologist or registered social worker. This is assuming teachers have Johnson's insurance. One participant who was a substitute teacher mentioned the prohibitive expense of Johnson's. They stated they could not afford the group rate because they were substituting and had to go with a less expensive and less thorough insurance company. The EAP would still be helpful but would not go as far when paying for regular counselling sessions. (Group Insurance, 2022). When looking at Eastern Health (Newfoundland's eastern regional health authority) in comparison, they use the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP). The EFAP is closely related to the EAP, except other family members in the household of an employee who qualifies for this program can also avail of the program (Employee and Family Assistance Program, 2022). Another difference is that in Eastern Health, six sessions per year are covered. If someone from Eastern Health availed of this service every year of a thirty-year career, they would technically be able to avail of 180 sessions. Someone from NLESD, at this point, would only be able to avail of 75 sessions, which throughout a 30-year career would only equal 2.5 sessions per year.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

The other issue with EAP is that all participants who mentioned that they had availed of this service stated they had heard about it through family or friends who worked with Eastern Health, not from anyone within their teaching professions. This indirect approach to counselling indicates an issue with how this information is being communicated to teachers. Some methods could be used to help spread knowledge about EAP to schools across the province. For my analysis, to gain more knowledge on EAP, I spoke with the EAP department at the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District, I was informed that in the 2019-2020 school year, 8.8% of the teacher population accessed EAP services. In the 2020-2021 school year, 10.53% of the teacher population accessed EAP services, and by the 2021-2023 school year, 14.69% of the teacher population accessed EAP services (Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers Association, 2022). These statistics indicate that the need for the EAP has almost doubled in the past three years. These statistics also indicate that 1 in 7 educators within NLESD access the EAP. The NLTA also informed me that for the over 1050 educators accessing the EAP, only two EAP employees are handling all the cases and meeting with the government, schools, and principals while trying to promote their program (Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers Association, 2022). With only two employees for the EAP, there is a severe need for an increase in resources for this program. Employees of the EAP have informed me that they are working on launching a new paper campaign (they have done similar in the past) that includes posters for staff rooms and washrooms, along with fridge magnets for staff rooms. More can still be done to make educators aware of this program. Following a violent incident in a school, or if a teacher seems to be struggling emotionally, there should be a protocol in place where administrators would be required to provide a package with optional mental health resources that

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

teachers could access should they choose to do so. Perhaps if a protocol was in place, more employees would avail of the service.

Doorways is a free one-session walk-in counselling program offered through all regional health authorities in Newfoundland and Labrador and funded by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. (Bridge the gapp, 2022). This program offers a way for people struggling with their mental health to have quick access to counselling. Clients can reach out for counselling and get an appointment for the same day without having a referral. Currently, Doorways offers in-person, phone, and video sessions.

Doorways is available for people ages 12 and older. The only major disadvantage would be that it is a single session, so one would not benefit from the consistency of a regular therapist. Because only some have the funds to pay for counselling, Doorways is a free and fast option, which makes it a practical resource. Some participants mentioned having a Doorways office stationed in their school, which made it convenient for staff members or students who needed counselling.

Participants mentioned feeling desensitized to other violent incidents after victimization, experiencing a loss of passion, and having thoughts of leaving the profession entirely. These results align with the research conducted by Bass et al. (2016), and Wilson et al. (2011) who indicate that loss of passion and sense of self-efficacy can occur following a violent incident, which can lead to teachers leaving the profession. Survey Participant 20 stated, "I will at times ignore the verbal abuse for the sake of the rest of the class having their entire music time wasted." Other participants stated similar things indicating that they had learned how to take abuse regularly, leading to an increased risk of these abusive behaviours continuing because they are not being properly handled. Participants talked about changing schools to solve their issues

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

with violence, indicating that the school they left never addressed the issues and lost a teacher because of it. With some participants feeling supported and loyal to their administrations and others changing schools, this indicates a lack of continuity between schools, which brings to question how strictly the administration is following protocols following violent incidents. Other participants indicated a desire to leave the profession, with some young teachers questioning how it will be possible to work in this career for thirty years because of the adverse effects they are experiencing on their physical and mental health. These statements carried a sense of urgency with teachers indicating the need for improvements to the school system that advocates for teachers.

### **5.3.1.3 Music Educators' perceived support following a violent incident.**

Music educators receive support from many avenues, including within their classroom, school community, administration, and co-workers. Some participants who described their traumatic experiences with teacher victimization reported feeling less supported in their schools and school communities. Participants who reported feeling supported also reported fewer incidents of violence, often reporting zero incidents.

Support within the music classroom was an important topic of discussion among participants, with mixed reports of how this support looks from class to class. In-class teacher support, such as student assistants or instructional resource teachers, varied among participants, with some describing a lack of these resources in the school compared to the level of needs in the building. Sheppard (2022) strongly encourages educators in Newfoundland and Labrador to request risk assessments in their classrooms, and record any incidents that occur so administration, the union and the school district can be made aware. Currently, schools are given an allotment of classroom support professionals that coincide with the number of children in the

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

building rather than the number of children with needs. McMahon et al. (2019) and Espelage et al. (2013) advocate for increasing the number of additional teacher supports that are in each school to meet the demands of the needs in each school. The needs within a school are monitored, however, and if teachers document classroom incidents regularly, they have an increased chance of getting additional support, however still limited. Participants also mentioned having their teacher resources removed from music class because it was seen as a chance to give the teacher resources a break, thus implying a lack of regard for music education as a subject.

Administrators are crucial members of a school community that can make or break a healthy school environment. McMahon et al. (2017) suggest a lack of administrative support can lead to further incidents of violence in a classroom and state that a lack of administrative support could be considered a form of violence in itself. With the proper support of an administrator, they can guide educators to grow and encourage success in all subject areas. For instance, a participant described brushing off an incident that should have been addressed head-on. When the administrator was told, they could educate the participant so they could understand what appropriate classroom behaviour looked like and guide them through the proper discipline protocol, which in this case, involved contacting the parents of the students involved. Another participant faced the opposite experience where they had an instrument thrown at them, and when they needed an x-ray, the administrator did not support their request for the appropriate leave to do so. This teacher was left feeling isolated and invalidated following their traumatic experience. This example shows how administrators can make educators feel empowered or beaten down.

The community surrounding a school can be very warm and welcoming, while other situations can be seen as toxic toward teachers who do not meet their standards. While

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

cyberbullying was not a form of violence that participants in the survey selected, many participants who indicated issues within the school community described being talked about on social media platforms where parents would start threads about specific teachers in a school and speak of their frustrations. While it may seem acceptable for a person to voice a concern on social media, threads that attack a teacher can be very damaging to the teacher's mental health and spread false narratives. Another teacher spoke of not feeling welcomed into the music education community because they had not done a music specialty but had wound up in a music education teaching position. Some music educators refused to provide access to professional development opportunities and resources because this teacher did not have a music or music education degree. Not providing a teacher with resources does not only do a teacher a disservice but their students too. This teacher was asking for help and guidance, and being provided with resources would have helped to improve their interactions with students in a music education setting.

School support takes on a physical and emotional manifestation within a building. A participant whom a parent had once attacked indicated the need to have another staff member present whenever they arranged to meet with a parent in person. In this case, the staff member's support is paramount to feelings of safety. Other participants discussed issues with school support in the context of assemblies and school concerts. The administration often requires music educators to put on school performances, whether for a Remembrance Day assembly or a school musical. These types of performances require much additional support from other staff members, and non-music specialists who are required to help with supervision and other tasks can sometimes resent the music educator for the extra work. This resentment can lead to harmful interactions such as the one Survey Participant C faced when confronted by a teacher who lost

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

their “free period” when they forgot to bring their students to a choir rehearsal. Those rehearsals require extra supervision, so assuming it was a free period is also disrespectful to the music specialist.

Respect was also heavily discussed within this study, indicating that lack of respect in a classroom or school environment could lead to a heightened risk of violence against music educators. Music education is not a core subject area; therefore, music educators often must advocate for their programs. Parents and teachers sometimes view music as unimportant, and students can often mirror that opinion. Focus Group Participant A recounted an experience where a student asked if they had chosen to be a music teacher because they did not have to do much. Focus Group Participant C spoke of the feelings of embarrassment and disrespect following the confrontation with their co-worker. Participants also discussed the issue of supervision when required to work with 80-100 children at a time in choir and ensemble settings where teachers do not stay to help supervise their students and leave the music educator to manage the entire group alone. Being placed in these situations increases the risk of behaviour issues and violence. Lastly, participants indicated feeling like they were not viewed as equal members of their staff. Focus Group Participant A described trying to convince their staff to get a child tested for an exceptionality and being denied because they're not seen as having any knowledge in that area. Focus Group Participant C mentioned trying to take a professional development course on Relationships First and being denied because they were not a classroom music educator. A music educator often works with every student in an entire school for multiple years, placing them in a perfect position for a course such as Relationships First to be a beneficial aid. To understand this situation, I spoke with a professional at the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association. In that conversation, I learned that nowhere in the collective agreement does it state that music

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

educators are not allowed to take professional development opportunities out of their subject area. Therefore, this administrator would be denying their music specialist a career-building opportunity.

### **5.3.1.4 The prevention of violence against music educators.**

Throughout this study, participants provided clear and insightful solutions to reducing the risk of violence to music educators. The majority of the suggestions pertained to classroom layout and teacher training. Music classrooms often take many forms, and with space limitations, music classes can take place in a gymnasium, cafeteria, or library. Often after school programs and staff meetings can also occur in the music room, therefore, exposing expensive music equipment to the hands of children outside of a music context and subjecting them to potential damage or theft. With space limitations, storage can be an issue for music educators, leaving them no choice but to leave instruments out in the open. Participants in this study spoke of instruments being thrown or damaged and items being stolen. Specifically, some participants mentioned having instruments thrown at them, causing bodily harm. While a storage closet is not always available in a music classroom, portable cabinets with lockable doors could be brought in to help put certain items out of sight for children who might be tempted to throw something. In music classrooms, providing excellent sightlines, a large open space, and ensuring a PA system that works were classroom elements that indicated higher rates of success in preventing behavioural issues and classroom violence.

Teacher training was a critical tool that participants recommended to help mitigate violence. Hedden (2015) conducted a study on offering a behaviour management course to music education groups and found success in providing participants with this training, advocating for additional behavioural training for educators. Crisis Prevention and Intervention (CPI) training

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

was mentioned numerous times throughout this study. McMahon et al. (2014) also strongly advocates for behavioural management training for all educators. CPI is a one-day course offered to teachers and health professionals to educate them on how to de-escalate situations, self-defence, and build a safe space in their classroom (CPI Training Programs, 2022). Teachers who specialize in students with special needs regularly take this course; however, most classroom teachers do not have this certification. Teachers are not legally allowed to touch a student physically, so if a child is in crisis and hits or bites a teacher, they often do not know what to do to protect themselves. Providing all educators access to this training would be a practical step toward giving educators the tools to reduce classroom violence.

The Relationships First program was also highly recommended by a couple of participants who had taken the course. Focus Group Participant C described Relationships First as a way to guide “conversations between students, but let them lead it.” The philosophy of Relationships First is to build community interconnectedness and teach self-confidence and empathy during interactions with others (Vaandering, 2022). This course is a peaceful approach to conflict resolution that could be an excellent tool for mitigating and preventing future violent incidents in a classroom. As stated previously, music educators often work with every student in an entire school, so being given tools like this and the ability to spread that knowledge to a wide span of students could help establish a respectful, healthy, and safe classroom environment.

Throughout this study, it was often made clear that young and inexperienced teachers were struggling with violence. Some teachers mentioned feeling blindsided by a violent incident or not understanding that the incident needed to be addressed. Other new teachers did not have the confidence to stand up for themselves and express their needs to their administration for fear of losing work. Substitute teachers mentioned feeling a lack of job security, and one participant

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

brought to light that substitute teachers cannot avail themselves of professional development opportunities. The idea of doing these types of professional development during the completion of the music education degree was also suggested by participants. In that case, new teachers might be better prepared to enter the workforce and better trained to manage incidents as they occur. Other participants mentioned the internship and how some teaching students are very protected by their supervising teachers, leaving them unsuspecting of what issues could arise when unsupervised. Discussions arose around whether interns should be allowed to teach without supervision, and suggestions were made that would encourage interns to work with at-risk youth through other programs such as Street Reach<sup>5</sup> or Choices for Youth<sup>6</sup>. These programs could expose new teachers to different challenging situations while under the supervision of certified professionals and working with smaller group numbers, creating a more controlled setting for learning.

Through this study, music educators who had lived the shared experience of teacher victimization opened up about their perceptions of trauma, support, healing, and how to improve the school system to protect music teachers in future. Participants could gain a deeper understanding of what had happened to them and begin to come to terms with the implications of their trauma for the future. Through this study, participants were given a voice to help ensure that some good could come from their experiences.

---

<sup>5</sup> Thrive. (2023, June 14). *Street reach*. <https://www.thrivecyn.ca/what-do-we-do/street-reach/> : An outreach program for people ages 16 and over.

<sup>6</sup> Choices for Youth (2023, June 14). *Together, we can end youth homelessness*. <https://www.choicesforyouth.ca/> : A registered charity that focuses on aiding youth and families between the ages of 16 and 29 to secure housing, employment, and healthcare.

### **5.4 Reflection on Methodology**

The mixed-methods approach to this study was implemented successfully, and the data collected provided a tangible perspective of participants' lived experiences. The quantitative aspects of this study allowed for concrete statistics to be gathered. These statistics helped provide insight into the phenomenon's prevalence, and the qualitative aspects of the study acted as a window into the lives of participants who experienced trauma incidents. This data helped to establish an understanding of what needs to be improved in the school system to help protect music educators in the future.

### **5.5 Participant Selection Process**

As mentioned in Chapter three, participants were recruited through the NLMEA Facebook page and email. For the survey portion of the study, 49 participants took part and completed most or all of the quantitative portion of the study. Of those participants, 29 responded to the survey's open-ended qualitative questions. It should be noted that most participants who did not respond to the open-ended questions stated that they had never experienced teacher-directed violence and had no more information to elaborate on within the topic. Five participants from the survey indicated an interest in partaking in the focus group, and four ended up participating. Within the focus group, two participants had over 20 years of teaching experience, and two had less than two years of teaching experience. These participants were selected because they expressed interest in participating in the focus group. There was no other deciding factor for who was chosen to participate; however, the contrast in work experience proved very insightful for how the teaching profession has evolved over time. The participants who volunteered to partake in the focus group had all experienced violence in the

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

classroom and were very invested in having their voices heard, which made for very open and honest conversations and a rich collection of data.

After the criteria for participants had already been set, I was contacted by numerous interested participants who did not meet the criteria. It became clear that the criteria could have been broadened to include different types of participants. For instance, participants had to be currently working as classroom music teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador. Some interested participants had migrated out of their music positions to more general classroom teaching positions due to violent experiences. Others had left the profession entirely due to trauma. Lastly, some participants had left the province but had stories they wanted to speak on surrounding incidents of trauma within the history of their careers while working in Newfoundland and Labrador. These examples indicate room for future research in this area.

### **5.6 Focus Group**

Due to the pandemic, the focus group was conducted virtually. In Newfoundland and Labrador, the government has devoted considerable resources towards improving internet quality and speed across the province due to the high need for it during online learning in rural communities. Because of this, participants living in rural towns could participate in the study. Before the pandemic, this may have been prohibited due to a lack of resources. The ability to use video calling also helped emotions to come across more clearly when participants were telling their stories, enforcing the meaning behind their words. This video focus group also allowed participants to take part from four different locations across the province, contributing to the richness of the collected data.

### **5.7 Data Analysis**

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

While it was evident in chapter three that I would be using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to look at the data collected from the study, numerous tools contributed to a comprehensive analysis. Firstly, Qualtrics was used to conduct the survey, and within the application, several built-in tools helped streamline the collection of statistics and the rendition of graphs and diagrams. Secondly, Delve was used to input all significant portions of text and transcriptions from the survey and the focus group to categorize and narrow down into themes. Through the use of Delve, four broad emergent themes were established that acted as umbrellas for various discussion points within those themes.

While the participant group was relatively small compared to the pool of music educators in the province, the quantitative data provided insight into what some teachers face. The qualitative data provided rich and deep insight into the phenomenon of violence against music educators and the current needs within this group. Overall, the study allowed music educators to look within themselves and express their personal feelings and experiences on the phenomenon of violence against music educators. This expression allowed some participants to come to terms with what happened to them and use their voices to work towards change within the school system in Newfoundland and Labrador.

## Chapter 6: Summary, Introspections, and Implications

### 6.1 Summary

While violence against educators is becoming a hot topic in educational research around the world, we are just starting to scratch the surface of individual subject areas such as music, which may have specific potential for violence. In this chapter, I took a deeper look at the data collected through this study and the meaning behind it. I established two research questions in this study: what are classroom music educators' experiences of violence, and how can school systems change to help prevent or mitigate future incidents?

Through a two-part mixed-methods approach, I gathered quantitative and qualitative data to quantify and analyze this issue's prevalence, background, and potential causes. Classroom music educators currently teaching in Newfoundland and Labrador were invited to participate virtually through the NLMEA Facebook page and email. By working with participants virtually, there was a broad spectrum of participants from across the province who could participate, which helped enrich the data collected.

I used IPA to analyze the qualitative data using Delve to help sort through data and create four themes:

- the experience of violence against music educators
- the aftermath of violence against music educators
- music educators' perceived support following a violent incident
- the prevention of violence against music educators

Participants shared their personal experiences, dove into the difficulties they faced following victimization, whether they felt supported and what that support looked like, and how they thought the system could be improved to prevent future incidents. There were some programs

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

that people in the education system could be made more aware of and programs that already exist that could be implemented on a larger scale, along with additional suggestions for future consideration.

### **6.2 Implications**

#### ***6.2.1 Policy Makers***

Violence in schools is a growing concern, and for children to be safer, educators have to be safer. Numerous existing opportunities could be made more widely available to all educators, including CPI training. If CPI training were made mandatory for all educators, schools would be better equipped with the tools to mitigate and prevent violent incidents. Most teachers in a school do not know how to defend themselves when faced with violence, so introducing a self-defence PD for all teachers so they know what they can legally do to protect themselves would be an advantageous way to invest in educators. Also, Relationships First training is an effective and peaceful preventative method that fosters relationships with students and teachers. Implementing this with all teachers would also provide educators with valuable and progressive tools to manage behaviours and discussions before they evolve into conflicts.

Mental health is a growing concern amongst educators, with teachers reporting burnout and increased stress, especially since the pandemic. The EAP and Doorways are excellent resources for teachers to gain quick and affordable access to counselling; however, based on this study, it is clear that there is an issue with this resource reaching the eyes of educators who may need access. With more efforts put into advertising the programs and protocols put in place for administrators to follow, perhaps these programs would see a further increase in their use, and educators would have more autonomy regarding their own mental health.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

### *6.2.2 Administrators*

Throughout this study, participants who had not experienced violence in their music classrooms indicated feeling supported by their administrators. It was common for participants who had experienced violence to indicate feeling less supported by their administration. These feelings of a lack of support suggested a correlation to an increase in violence when administrators were less supportive of their staff, which is supported by McMahon et al. in their 2017 study when they go as far as to say that a lack of administrative support could be seen as a form of violence. It was revealed within this study that incidents were handled differently by a different administration, which significantly affected the repercussions following the incident. These differences indicate that there is no specific protocol in place for administrators to follow after a violent incident. For instance, when students from another school vandalized a music educator's classroom, the teacher's administrator attempted to contact the other school to work towards a suitable repercussion for the students responsible. However, the other school's administrator did not seem to view the incident with the same severity level, and the students did not see any severe repercussions for their actions. Administrators must listen and advocate for their staff. Watching for the well-being of staff members and validating their concerns will help create a safe space for teachers.

It is also important to note that some music educators in this study were denied access to teacher training and professional development opportunities simply because they were music specialists. Courses such as Relationships First and CPI are open to all teachers, and no educator should be prevented from taking a course such as this. Where music educators often work with every student in an entire school, including students with exceptionalities, often for many years, courses such as these would be most beneficial for a music educator. Preventing a music

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

educator from taking a course like this because of their specialty indicates a lack of understanding of the role music educators play in a school. Educators – generalists and specialists alike - need to be given equal opportunities, especially when it comes to professional development opportunities that address classroom management and relationship building.

### ***6.2.3 Music Educators***

Not every problem is easily solved; however, some things can be changed depending on the resources within the school. Participants heavily discussed classroom layout, with storage being a big issue. Some participants had students in their music programs with exceptionalities that make them prone to throwing objects. This issue was exacerbated by musical instruments and tools left out in a classroom. Since there are often no storage closets to spare in a school, the installation of external storage and shelving units would be beneficial in these situations. Participants also indicated that the more clutter and the smaller the space, the more risk for children bumping into one another and sightlines being interrupted, which could increase the risk for violence. Keeping the music room free of desks or other objects that could impede movement would also help minimize the risk of violence. These suggestions should be viewed on an individual basis based on the needs of each school; however, if a teacher is reporting issues, they should be acknowledged.

### ***6.2.4 For Further Study***

This study touches on a phenomenon that is under-researched. While I introduce the concept of violence directed against music educators, this is only the beginning of the possibility for much more research in this area. This is the first study on violence directed against teachers that focuses on a specific subject area to my knowledge. It would potentially be beneficial to study other subject areas to see what sorts of risk exists throughout the teaching profession.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

Within this study, there were some gaps that could also be analyzed with further study. Although the survey included a question on what ages were taught, participants responded with ages and grade levels, and the resulting data was too unclear to include in the study. Therefore, I was unable to determine whether specific grade levels presented a higher risk of violence, or if different grade levels presented different risks. I also did not analyze the gender, race, or socioeconomic status of either teachers or students. For instance, Cullen et al. (2008), Moon et al. (2012), and Patchin and Hinduja (2011) all agree that women are at a lower risk for physical violence in schools. It would be interesting to see if any biases such as sexism or racism presented any risks for specific forms of violence against teachers. It would also be helpful to know what genders may be at higher risk to perpetrate violence and why that might be. Furthermore, a study could investigate whether there is a correlation between socioeconomic status and/or demographics of students and the risks of teacher-directed violence in schools.

In the distribution phase of this study, I was approached by various people who had left the teaching profession, left the province, or side-stepped into different jobs within the school system and no longer taught music. My original parameters for this study were that participants had to be currently teaching classroom music within the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Because of this, I could not include anyone who was not currently a classroom music educator in the province. Because of this, I was unable to discuss the stories of former classroom music educators who had left the profession due to violence, and stories from teachers who had moved out of the province. This would be beneficial to research further.

### ***6.2.5 Summary***

This study is unique as to my knowledge, it is the first to focus on violence against music educators specifically. I used Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis to interpret the shared

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

phenomenon of violence against music educators. To comprehensively understand the topic, I used a mixed-methods approach to examine the experiences of music educators with the phenomenon. I conducted a survey with quantitative and qualitative open-ended questions and a focus group where participants expanded upon their shared experiences with the phenomenon. Within the study, I included classroom music educators currently teaching in Newfoundland and Labrador. Retired teachers, teachers who were no longer teaching music, teachers who had left the profession, and teachers who had left the province were not included in the study, which provides room for future research.

In phase one, the quantitative data collected revealed that music educators face violence in their classrooms and provided eye-opening insight into music education and violence aspects. 59% of participants indicated they had experienced violence. However, later in the study, more participants indicated they had experienced different forms of violence, which suggests that participants did not realize they had been victimized or did not want to see themselves as victims. The form of violence that the highest number of participants had experienced was verbal threats, and later in discussions, participants spoke of experiencing vandalism or other forms of violence following verbal threats indicating verbal threats had not been taken seriously, leading to more incidents of violence in the future.

In phase two, the data collected was sorted into themes using Delve. The themes were:

- the experience of violence against music educators,
- the aftermath of violence against music educators,
- music educators' perceived support following a violent incident, and
- the prevention of violence against music educators.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

Participants told stories of their experiences with violence and analyzed all aspects of each incident, interpreting their experiences and coming to new understandings through the discussions. Teachers that spoke highly of their school administration and felt supported also reported lower levels of violence, supporting the data presented by McMahon et al. in their 2017 article indicating that participants who had less support from their administration faced higher risks of violence. This statistic is particularly poignant when considering music educators because of the theme of respect that arose through the study. This study indicated that some music educators who experience violence do not feel respected within their school staff or school communities. Because music is not a core subject, and teacher resources are already limited in schools, music educators are not always given the same resources as other educators, placing them at an increased risk for violence within their schools.

Mental health was also a heavily discussed topic within this study, indicating that teachers need to be provided with more information and support for mental health resources. These resources already exist. The EAP has confirmed that the uptake of their program has almost doubled in the past two years. However, many teachers need to be made aware that these resources are available, so efforts must be made to increase their visibility. These efforts might be made by creating a mental health protocol for the administration to follow to ensure teachers know what resources are available when they are struggling.

Lastly, teacher training programs were discussed as a crucial prevention tool for violence. Participants asserted that music educators are not always given the same opportunities as classroom teachers. Some participants stated they had been denied access to specific teacher training opportunities they had requested to partake in, which would have helped reduce their risk of violence. This denial of access to further education because of their music specialty

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

solidifies the feeling of a lack of respect for participants. Courses such as CPI and Relationships First were mentioned by numerous participants as very effective methods to reduce the risk of violence against educators. Requiring all educators to train in these areas would be a vital step toward fostering safer school environments for teachers and students.

### **6.3 Introspection**

After my workplace trauma as an educator, I felt broken, and the more time passed, the deeper my trauma became. The trial to be the best educator I could be while fearing violent repercussions became all-consuming. I feared getting in trouble following incidents because of past experiences with some unsupportive administrators, so I stopped reporting things. This made me constantly uneasy at work, day in and day out. At the time of my incident, it felt as though I had nobody in my corner looking out for me and my well-being. I was defeated and felt wholly inadequate as an educator. In the beginning, I dreamt of becoming a force in the music community when I started teaching music. I longed to be the teacher to whom children could come when they needed advice or a safe space. I was driven to make music the foundation of the community at any school I taught. This dream was shattered for me.

Through the process of this study, however, I began to heal. I must acknowledge that this study was incredibly triggering, and hearing the shocking stories of other educators sent me into a dark place. Interestingly, I had yet to hear of many of the mental health resources discussed by participants in the study, so I ended up availing of the EAP, which has helped tremendously. Because I was studying EAP and benefiting from it, I gained a unique perspective on its advantages and flaws, which I could discuss directly with employees within the program, who were eager to share and brainstorm with me. I can now say my perceptions of my trauma have changed, and I feel very hopeful for the future.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

I was led to conduct this study because of the realization that other music educators shared similar experiences with me. I learned that my incident had not happened randomly, that things could have been done differently to prevent it from occurring, and that this issue was more extensive than just one music teacher in one school. I became increasingly curious to see how many music educators had shared similar experiences. I wanted to hear their stories and learn more about what was being done to protect music educators from these incidents.

As I logged off my computer after concluding the focus group, I felt comforted by the comradery of the participants involved. There was a spectrum of gender and age in the focus group, and I was happy to see that while the conversations were difficult, the more senior participants took on mentorship roles that would continue after all participants logged off from the session. Younger participants were offered curriculum resources and encouraged to stay in touch if they had any questions about music education in future. By the end of the focus group, the participants acted warmly toward each other, and it felt as though a sense of community had been built through the discussion of their shared experiences.

I learned that many educators participated in this study because they wanted their voices to be heard. Because of this, they chose to relive intense trauma and gave more detail than I anticipated because they wanted to provide a clear picture to readers of what they had experienced. While 41% of participants initially stated they had not experienced violence, I was also interested to see that some of them indicated later in the study that they had indeed experienced specific forms of violence, suggesting the percentage of participants who had experienced teacher-directed violence was higher than initially specified in the survey. Some of the stories told through this study shocked me, and how specific incidents were handled was utterly inappropriate.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

Through this study, I learned that violence against music educators is indeed an issue in classroom music settings. There are tangible ways to help prevent future incidents and better manage the trauma after a violent incident occurs. I heard from participants as they discussed their struggles with mental health and the lack of information regarding resources within their grasp, such as the EAP or Doorways. I listened as music educators told me of their struggles to take professional development training that could help them with classroom management and help mitigate incidents of violence due to the lack of consensus on the role that music educators play within their workplaces. During my music education courses, professors told me that I would need to advocate for my music program, that I would face budget cuts, and that people would believe my subject area was less critical than core courses. I did not, however, realize that the lack of respect toward music educators could lead to a risk of physical or emotional injury. The issue of respect towards music educators was made clear through this study when unprompted; multiple participants raised this exact concern.

Through the open-ended responses in the survey and discussions within the focus group, I was delighted to see that participants had ideas for how to mitigate the phenomenon of violence against music educators. I was interested to see that a couple of participants had received CPI and Relationships First training, and happy for them to speak of the benefits of these programs. I was also interested in the various mental health options that participants discussed and recommended. After hearing about the current opportunities that exist, it is evident that we do not need to create new solutions to this issue. We need to work towards making these existing resources available to all teachers.

Music educators possess the magic of working with young learners on artistic pursuits, and yet they face unique challenges that place them at risk for violence in their classrooms. In

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

this study, I explored the shared experiences of forty-nine K-12 classroom music educators in Newfoundland and Labrador in a survey and four participants in a focus group. Participants in this study discussed their experiences with violence and brainstormed ways to protect music educators in the future. While their music is a prominent feature in school communities, through this study, the voices of music educators will have the chance to rise above the challenges of violence that they may face. While violence against music educators is an issue in classroom music settings in Newfoundland and Labrador, some steps can be taken to reduce the risk of violence in future. Educating teachers on their rights, self-defence, conflict resolution, relationship building, and providing proper care and respect towards teachers when dealing with difficult situations will significantly improve school safety and music teachers' well-being. Many of these resources are already developed; however, is it not possible to have them made more readily available to all educators? This study is a stepping-stone for music educators looking to reflect on their own experiences with this phenomenon and may be seen as a catalyst for educational leaders hoping to help improve the existing school system.

**References**

- Alase, A. (2017). The interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA): a guide to a good qualitative research approach. *International Journal of Education & Literacy Studies* 5(2), 9-19. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijels.v.5n.2p.9>
- Anderman, E. M., Eseplage, D. L., Reddy, L. A., McMahon, S. D., Martinez, A., Lane, K. L., Reynolds, C., & Paul, N. (2018). Teachers' reactions to experiences of violence: an attributional analysis. *Social Psychology of Education*, 21(3), 621–653. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-018-9438-x>
- Bass, B. I., Chen, P. Y., Henry, K. L., Tomazic, R. G., & Li, Y. (2016). The effects of student violence against school employees on employee burnout and work engagement: the roles of perceived school unsafety and transformational leadership. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 23(3), 318-336. <https://doi.org/10.1037/str0000011>
- Bauer, W. L. (2001). Classroom management for ensembles: effective preparation, good teaching, and fair and consistent discipline can help teachers manage ensembles of any size. Here are some useful ideas for your classroom. *Music Educators Journal*, 87(6), 27–32. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3399689>
- Bryant, S. (2023). Webex [Computer Software]. Cisco Systems. Retrieved from <https://www.webex.com/>
- Choices for Youth (2023, June 14). *Together, we can end youth homelessness*. <https://www.choicesforyouth.ca/>
- Consolidated Newfoundland and Labrador Regulation* (n.d.). Assembly Newfoundland and Labrador. Retrieved on November 27, 2022, from [https://www.assembly.nl.ca/legislation/sr/regulations/rc961134.htm#5\\_](https://www.assembly.nl.ca/legislation/sr/regulations/rc961134.htm#5_)

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

*CPI Training Programs* (n.d.). Crisis Prevention Institute. Retrieved on November 27, 2022, from <https://www.crisisprevention.com/en-CA/Our-Programs>

Dallmayr, F. (2009). Hermeneutics and inter-cultural dialog: linking theory and practice. *Ethics & Global Politics*, 2, 23-39. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.3402/egp.v2i1.1937>

Daniels, J. A., Bradley, M. C., & Hays, M. (2007). The impact of school violence on school personnel: implications for psychologists. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 38(6), 652-659. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0735-7028.38.6.652>

*Employee and Family Assistance Program* (n.d.). Eastern Health. Retrieved on November 27, 2022, from <https://www.easternhealth.ca/employees-and-physicians/ohs-efap/efap/>

*Employee Assistance Program* (n.d.). Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association. Retrieved on November 27, 2022, from <https://www.nlta.nl.ca/employee-assistance-program/>

Espelage, D., Anderman, E. M., Brown, V. E., Jones, A., Lane, k. L., McMahon, S. D., Reddy, L. A., & Reynolds, C. R. (2013). Understanding and preventing violence directed against teachers: recommendations for a national research, practice, and policy agenda. *American Psychologist*, 68(2), 75-87. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0031307>

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (n.d.). Regionalization. Retrieved on February 1, 2023, from <https://www.gov.nl.ca/mpa/local-governance-division/regionalization-3/>

*Group Insurance*. (n.d.). Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association. Retrieved on November 27, 2022, from <https://groupinsurance.nlta.ca/health-dental-travel/health/major-medical/>

Harris, M. (1956). *Music and the young mind: enhancing brain development and engaging learning*. Rowman & Littlefield Education.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

Hedden, D. G. (2015). Music education preservice teachers' confidence in resolving behavior problems. *National Association for Music Education, 34*(1), 33-41.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/8755123314548040>

*Hiring of Substitutes*. (n.d.). Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association. Retrieved on November 27, 2022, from [https://files.nlta.nl.ca/wp-content/uploads/public/documents/substitutes/sub\\_hiring.pdf](https://files.nlta.nl.ca/wp-content/uploads/public/documents/substitutes/sub_hiring.pdf)

Ho, L., & Limpaecher, A. (n.d.). Delve [computer software]. Twenty To Nine, LLC, New York City. <https://delvetool.com/>: An online software that is designed for qualitative data analysis

Horner, R. H., & Macaya, M. M. (2018). A framework for building safe and effective school environments: positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS). *Pedagogická orientace, 28*(4), 663-685.

LaGasse, A. B., & Thaut, M. H. (2012). Music and rehabilitation: neurological approaches. R. MacDonald (Ed.) *Music, health, and wellbeing* (153-163). Oxford University Press, Incorporated.

Larkin, M., Watts, S., & Clifton, E. (2006). Giving voice and making sense in interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*, 102-120.

10.1191/1478088706qp062oa

Lopez, A. (2023). Qualtrics [Computer Software]. CoreXM. Retrieved from

<https://www.qualtrics.com/>

McMahon, S. D., Peist, E., Davis, J. O., McConnell, E., Reaves, S. Reddy, L. A., Anderman, E. M., & Espelage, D. L. (2019). Addressing violence against teachers: a social-ecological

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

analysis of teachers' perspectives. *Psychology in the Schools*, 57(7), 1040-1056.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22382>

McMahon, S. D., Reaves, S., McConnell, E. A., Peist, E., Ruiz, L., & the APA Task Force on Classroom Violence Directed Against Teachers (2017). The ecology of teachers' experiences with violence and lack of administrative support. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 60(3-4), 502-515. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.12202>

McMahon, S. D., Martinez, A., Espelage, D., Rose, C., Reddy, L. A., Lane, K., Anderman, E. M., Reynolds, C. R., Jones, A., & Brown, V. (2014). Violence directed against teachers: results from a national survey. *Psychology in the Schools*, 51(7), 753-766.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.21777>

Moon, B., Morash, M., McCluskey, J. D. (2012). General strain theory and school bullying: an empirical test in South Korea. *Crime and Delinquency* 58(6), 827-855.

10.1177/0011128710364809

Mulcahy, D. M. (2007). Current issues in rural education in Newfoundland and Labrador. *Education in Rural Australia*, 17(1), 17-39.

<https://doi.org/10.3316/informit.320033635353874>

Noon, E. J. (2018). Interpretative phenomenological analysis: an appropriate methodology for educational research? *Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice* 6(1). 75-83.

<https://doi.org/10.14297/jpaap.v6i1.304>

Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers Association (2022). *Employee Assistance Program for Teachers Statistics*. <https://www.nlta.nl.ca/employee-assistance-program/>

Patchin, J. W., Hinduja, S. (2011). Traditional and nontraditional bullying among youth: a test of general strain theory. *Youth & Society* 43(2), 727-751. 10.1177/0044118X10366951

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

*Service Directory* (2022, November 27). Bridge the gap.

<https://nl.bridgethegap.ca/adult/service-directory/doorways-mental-health-walk-in-clinics-st-johns/>

Sheppard, M. (2022). Violence in the workplace: advice and guidelines for teachers.

*Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association: The Bulletin* 66(1), 8-9.

<https://www.nlta.nl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Bulletin-Sept-Oct-2022.pdf>

Smith, J. A. (2011). Evaluating the contribution of interpretative phenomenological analysis.

*Health Psychology Review* 5(1), 9-27. 10.1080/17437199.2010.510659

Statistics Canada (n.d.). Census profile, 2021 census of population. Retrieved February 1, 2023,

from <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&GENDERlist=1&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0&DGUIDlist=2021A00051001519&SearchText=st.%20john%27s>

Thrive. (2023, June 14). *Street reach*. <https://www.thrivecyn.ca/what-do-we-do/street-reach/>

University of Auckland (n.d.). *Answers to frequently asked questions about thematic analysis*.

<https://cdn.auckland.ac.nz/assets/psych/about/our-research/documents/Answers%20to%20frequently%20asked%20questions%20about%20thematic%20analysis%20April%202019.pdf>

Vaandeering, D. (n.d.). *The Philosophy*. Relationships First NL. Retrieved on November 27,

2022, from <https://www.relationshipsfirstnl.com/about>

VanDerveer, E. (1989). Stopping discipline problems before they start. *Music Educators*

*Journal*, 75(9), 23-25.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

Wilson, C. M., Douglas, K. S., & Lyon, D. R. (2011). Violence against teachers: prevalence and consequences. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 25*(12), 2353-2371.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260510383027>

Woody, R. H. (2001). Reflective Classroom Management. *Teaching Music, 8*(5), 46-50.

## Appendix A: Letter of Consent for Focus Group

### Informed Consent Form

Title: Violence Against Music Educators

Researchers: Rosemary Lawton, Memorial University of Newfoundland Faculty of Education, [rel282@mun.ca](mailto:rel282@mun.ca)

Supervisor: Dr. David Buley, Memorial University of Newfoundland Faculty of Education, [dbuley@mun.ca](mailto:dbuley@mun.ca)

You are invited to take part in a research project entitled “*Violence Against Music Educators.*”

This form is part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. It also describes your right to withdraw from the study. In order to decide whether you wish to participate in this research study, you should understand enough about its risks and benefits to be able to make an informed decision. This is the informed consent process. Take time to read this carefully and to understand the information given to you. Please contact the researcher, Rosemary Lawton, if you have any questions about the study or for more information not included here before you consent.

It is entirely up to you to decide whether to take part in this research. If you choose not to take part in this research or if you decide to withdraw from the research once it has started, there will be no negative consequences for you, now or in the future.

### Introduction

My name is Rosemary Lawton and I hold a Bachelor of Music, a Bachelor of Music Education, and I am currently working on my Master’s in Education at Memorial University of Newfoundland. As part of my Master’s thesis, I am conducting research under the supervision of Dr. David Buley.

Violence against teachers is becoming a growing concern in school systems however, violence against music educators is an under-researched issue (McMahon et al., 2019)<sup>7</sup>. It is crucial to build an understanding of the prevalence and causes of violence against music educators in order to put resources in place to help prevent teacher-victimization in future.

---

<sup>7</sup> McMahon, S. D., Peist, E., Davis, J. O., McConnell, E., Reaves, S. Reddy, L. A., Anderman, E. M., & Espelage, D. L. (2019). Addressing violence against teachers: a social-ecological analysis of teachers’ perspectives. *Psychology in the Schools*, 57(7), 1040-1056. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22382>

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

### **Purpose of study:**

The goals of this study are to establish an understanding of the potential causes of violence against music educators, and to build knowledge on how to prevent or mitigate future issues. Through this study, the researcher will, gather data about the prevalence of violence against music teachers across the province, learn about personal experiences teacher-directed violence, and discuss ways to improve the current methods of prevention and management of violent incidents.

### **What you will do in this study:**

Participants will take part in a focus group to answer questions on personal experiences with violence against music educators and will have the opportunity to discuss these experiences more in-depth. Participants reserve the right to skip any questions they do not want to answer.

### **Length of time:**

The focus group will take no longer than three hours.

### **Withdrawal from the study:**

the participant has the option to withdraw from the study and their data provided can be removed up until August 31, 2022 upon request, after which time, the data will be aggregated and prepared for publication. If the participant chooses to withdraw from the focus group, where it will be recorded, any information provided by the participant will be omitted from the final report and the recordings will be stored securely for a minimum of 5 years.

### **Possible benefits:**

Participants of the focus group will be able to hear stories of similar experiences from other participants. By sharing these stories, participants may feel less isolated in their experiences, which may help to empower participants.

By quantitatively analyzing the prevalence and potential causes of violence against music educators, findings may suggest concrete and tangible trends that may indicate a need for change in the education system. By qualitatively analyzing stories and experiences of individual participants, insight might be brought towards potential solutions for teacher-directed violence in music settings. If these sorts of trends are uncovered, adaptations in the teaching workforce may be justified and the education system could improve.

### **Possible risks:**

Because this study focuses on teacher victimization, there is a risk of emotional distress following the reliving of trauma. If participants experience any psychological repercussions, they will be directed to the Mental Health Crisis Line, 24 hour Toll Free -- 1-888-737-4668.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

### **Confidentiality**

When participating in a focus group, although the researcher will safeguard the confidentiality of the discussion to the best of her ability, the nature of focus groups prevents the researcher from guaranteeing that other members of the group will do so. Please respect the confidentiality of the other members of the group by not repeating what is said in the focus group to others and be aware that the other members of the group may not respect your confidentiality.

### **Anonymity:**

The focus group is not anonymous. Participants may be identifiable to informed readers in the findings, particularly if they agree to the use of direct quotes, due to the relatively small target of music educators in Newfoundland and Labrador. Any data collected will be anonymized and pseudonyms will be given to participants to prevent possible identification after publication.

### **Recording of Data:**

The focus group will be recorded using video and audio recording to ensure that the participants experiences are being collected efficiently. Participants need to turn off their cameras if they do not wish to be recorded.

### **Storage of Data:**

Data will be stored on a password protected external hard drive and kept in a locked cabinet for a minimum of five years, as required by Memorial University policy on Integrity in Scholarly Research. Rosemary Lawton and Dr. David Buley will have access to the data. When the data is no longer required, the data will be deleted.

### **Reporting of Results:**

Upon completion, Rosemary Lawton's thesis will be available at Memorial University's Queen Elizabeth II Library, and can be accessed online at: <http://collections.mun.ca/cdm/search/collection/theses>. The data will be reported using direct quotations if the participant provides permission, and in aggregated or summarized form.

### **Sharing of Results with Participants:**

Information gathered from this study will be formatted and presented in thesis format, which will be published and made available on the Memorial University of Newfoundland Libraries page. It will also be made available as a pamphlet, which will be posted on the NLMEA Facebook page.

### **Questions:**

You are welcome to ask questions at any time during your participation in this research. If you would like more information about this study, please contact: Rosemary Lawton through email at [rl282@mun.ca](mailto:rl282@mun.ca) or Dr. David Buley through email at [dbuley@mun.ca](mailto:dbuley@mun.ca).

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research, such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant, you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at [icehr@mun.ca](mailto:icehr@mun.ca) or by telephone at 709-684-2861.

### **Consent:**

Your signature on this form means that:

- You have read the information about the research.
- You have been able to ask questions about this study.
- You are satisfied with the answers to all your questions.
- You understand what the study is about and what you will be doing.
- You understand that you are free to withdraw participation in the study without having to give a reason, and that doing so will not affect you now or in the future.
- You understand that if you choose to end participation **during** data collection, any data collected from you up to that point **will be retained by the researcher, unless you indicate otherwise.**
- You understand that if you choose to withdraw **after** data collection has ended, your data can be removed from the study up to August 31, 2022.

By signing this form, you do not give up your legal rights and do not release the researchers from their professional responsibilities.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

### Your Signature Confirms:

- I have read what this study is about and understood the risks and benefits. I have had adequate time to think about this and had the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered.
- I agree to participate in the research project understanding the risks and contributions of my participation, that my participation is voluntary, and that I may end my participation.
- A copy of this Informed Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

**Participant Consent: Please email [rcl282@mun.ca](mailto:rcl282@mun.ca) stating that you have read the Focus Group Informed Consent form, and that you consent to participating in the study.**

### Researcher's Signature:

I have explained this study to the best of my ability. I invited questions and gave answers. I believe that the participant fully understands what is involved in being in the study, any potential risks of the study and that he or she has freely chosen to be in the study.

---

Signature of Principal Investigator

---

Date

**Appendix B: Letter of Consent for Survey**

**Informed Consent Form**

Title: Violence Against Music Educators

Researchers: Rosemary Lawton, Memorial University of Newfoundland Department of Education, [rcl282@mun.ca](mailto:rcl282@mun.ca)

Supervisor: Dr. David Buley, Memorial University of Newfoundland Department of Education, [dbuley@mun.ca](mailto:dbuley@mun.ca)

You are invited to take part in a research project entitled “*Violence Against Music Educators.*”

This form is part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. It also describes your right to withdraw from the study. In order to decide whether you wish to participate in this research study, you should understand enough about its risks and benefits to be able to make an informed decision. This is the informed consent process. Take time to read this carefully and to understand the information given to you. Please contact the researcher, Rosemary Lawton, if you have any questions about the study or for more information not included here before you consent.

It is entirely up to you to decide whether to take part in this research. If you choose not to take part in this research or if you decide to withdraw from the research once it has started, there will be no negative consequences for you, now or in the future.

**Introduction**

My name is Rosemary Lawton and I hold a Bachelor of Music, a Bachelor of Music Education, and I am currently working on my Masters in Education at Memorial University of Newfoundland. As part of my Masters thesis, I am conducting research under the supervision of Dr. David Buley.

Violence against teachers is becoming a growing concern in school systems however, violence against music educators is an under-researched issue (McMahon et al., 2019)<sup>8</sup>. It is crucial to

---

<sup>8</sup> McMahon, S. D., Peist, E., Davis, J. O., McConnell, E., Reaves, S. Reddy, L. A., Anderman, E. M., & Espelage, D. L. (2019). Addressing violence against teachers: a social-ecological analysis of teachers’ perspectives. *Psychology in the Schools*, 57(7), 1040-1056. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22382>

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

build an understanding of the prevalence and causes of violence against music educators in order to put resources in place to help prevent teacher-victimization in future.

### **Purpose of study:**

The goals of this study are to establish an understanding of the potential causes of violence against music educators, and to build knowledge on how to prevent or mitigate future issues. Through this study, the researcher will, gather data about the prevalence of violence against music teachers across the province, learn about personal experiences teacher-directed violence, and discuss ways to improve the current methods of prevention and management of violent incidents.

### **What you will do in this study:**

Participants will fill out a short survey to answer questions on personal experiences with teacher victimization. Participants reserve the right to skip any questions that they do not wish to answer throughout the survey. There is also an option for participants to participate in a focus group should they choose to do so. In the focus group, participants will take part in a short meeting through Webex to discuss the topic more in-depth. Participants who indicate their interest in participating in a small focus group will be randomized and five participants will be chosen to participate. The focus group will take a maximum of three hours and will occur outside of work hours. The focus group will be held using Webex. Participants who answer “yes” to the question 25 in the survey asking of your interest in participating in the focus group will be redirected to a new survey window to provide your email address to be contacted to participate in the focus group, so that potentially identifying information is collected separately from your survey responses.

### **Length of time:**

The survey will take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete.

### **Withdrawal from the study:**

The survey portion of this study is completely anonymous. Once the survey is submitted, the data cannot be withdrawn from the study as no personal information will be given.

### **Possible benefits:**

Participating in a survey on teacher victimization may help to give participants a sense of validation within their own experiences.

By quantitatively analyzing the prevalence and potential causes of violence against music educators, findings may suggest concrete and tangible trends that may indicate a need for change in the education system. By qualitatively analyzing stories and experiences of individual participants, insight might be brought towards potential solutions for teacher-directed violence in music settings. If these sorts of trends are uncovered, adaptations in the teaching workforce may be justified and the education system could improve.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

### **Possible risks:**

Because this study focuses on teacher victimization, there is a risk of emotional distress following the reliving of trauma. If participants experience any psychological repercussions, they will be directed to the Mental Health Crisis Line, 24 hour Toll Free -- 1-888-737-4668.

### **Confidentiality**

No personal data will be collected from the survey therefore the survey will be completely confidential.

### **Anonymity:**

The survey is completely anonymous as no personal data will be collected from participants therefore, participants will not be identifiable. Participants may be identifiable to informed readers in the findings, particularly in direct quotes, due to the relatively small target population of music teachers. The researcher will be using direct quotes from the long answer questions in this survey, so if the participant believes there might be potentially identifiable information in specific descriptions, they can choose not to answer that question.

### **Storage of Data:**

Data will be stored on a password protected external hard drive and kept in a locked filing cabinet for a minimum of five years, as required by Memorial University policy on Integrity in Scholarly Research. Rosemary Lawton and Dr. David Buley will have access to the data. When the data is no longer required, the data will be deleted.

The on-line survey company, *Qualtrics*, hosting this survey is located in the United States and as such is subject to U.S. laws. The US Patriot Act allows authorities to access the records of internet service providers. Therefore, anonymity and confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. If you choose to participate in this survey, you understand that your responses to the survey questions will be stored and may be accessed in the USA. The security and privacy policy for the web survey company can be found at the following link: <https://www.qualtrics.com/privacy-statement/>

### **Reporting of Results:**

Upon completion, Rosemary Lawton's thesis will be available at Memorial University's Queen Elizabeth II library, and can be accessed online at: <http://collections.mun.ca/cdm/search/collection/theses>. The data will be reported using direct quotations and in aggregated or summarized form.

### **Sharing of Results with Participants:**

Information gathered from this study will be formatted and presented in thesis format, which will be published and made available on the Memorial University of Newfoundland Libraries page. It will also be made available as a pamphlet, which will be posted on the NLMEA Facebook page.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

### Questions:

You are welcome to ask questions at any time during your participation in this research. If you would like more information about this study, please contact: Rosemary Lawton through email at [rl282@mun.ca](mailto:rl282@mun.ca) or Dr. David Buley through email at [dbuley@mun.ca](mailto:dbuley@mun.ca).

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research, such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant, you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at [icehr@mun.ca](mailto:icehr@mun.ca) or by telephone at 709-684-2861.

### Consent:

By completing this survey, you agree that:

- You have read the information about the research.
- You have been advised that you may ask questions about this study and receive answers prior to continuing.
- You are satisfied that any questions you had have been addressed.
- You understand what the study is about and what you will be doing.
- You understand that you are free to withdraw participation from the study by closing your browser window or navigating away from this page, without having to give a reason and that doing so will not affect you now or in the future.
- You understand that this data is being collected anonymously and therefore your data **cannot** be removed once you submit this survey.

By consenting to this online survey, you do not give up your legal rights and do not release the researchers from their professional responsibilities.

Please retain a copy of this consent information for your records.

**Clicking **accept** below and submitting this survey constitutes consent and implies your agreement to the above stipulations.**

**Appendix C: Survey Questions**

1 In what region do you teach?

Labrador (1)

Central (2)

Western (3)

Avalon (4)

Other (5) \_\_\_\_\_

-----  
Page Break \_\_\_\_\_

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

2 How many years of teaching experience do you have?

---

3 What level of musical/professional training do you have? Select all that apply.

High School Diploma (1)

Bachelor of Music (2)

Bachelor of Music Education (3)

Bachelor of Education (4)

Master's of Education (5)

Master's of Music (6)

Other (7) \_\_\_\_\_

4 What ages do you teach?

---

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

5 What types of music courses do you teach? Check all that apply

- Classroom Music (1)
- Instrumental Music (2)
- Choral Music (3)
- Other (4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

6 Is your music program mandatory for students to take?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Other (3) \_\_\_\_\_

End of Block: Demographics

---

Start of Block: Teacher-victimization statistics

Note Violence is often viewed as a physical altercation resulting in potential injury however, physical contact is just one aspect. Researchers such as Espelage et al. (2013), McMahon et al. (2019), and Wilson et al. (2011) argue, violence against teachers can range from verbal threats to theft, or physical assault.

---

7 Have you been a victim of teacher-directed violence in your career?

- Yes (1)
- Maybe (2)
- No (3)
-

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

8 Have you been a victim of teacher-directed violence within the past school year?

Yes (1)

No (2)

---

9 Have you personally experienced any of the following incidents? Check all that apply.

Property Damage (1)

Physical Threats (2)

Verbal Threats (3)

Cyber bullying by a student (4)

Physical Assault (5)

Threats with a weapon (6)

Theft (7)

---

10 Have you reported incidents where you have been victimized in any of the ways listed above?

Yes (1)

No (2)

Other (3) \_\_\_\_\_

---

Page Break \_\_\_\_\_

VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

11 If not, why did you not report the incident?

---

---

---

---

---

End of Block: Teacher-victimization statistics

---

Start of Block: Long Answer questions

12 Please write your experiences of teacher-directed violence in the space below.

---

---

---

---

---

13 How has your professional and private life been affected by teacher-directed violence?

---

---

---

---

---

VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

14 What is one of the most notable experiences of violence where you were the target in your role as a teacher?

---

---

---

---

---

15 Why do you think that this incident occurred?

---

---

---

---

---

16 How did you feel immediately after experiencing the incident?

---

---

---

---

---

17 How did you feel a few months/years after the incident occurred?

---

---

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

---

---

---

End of Block: Long Answer questions

---

Start of Block: Classroom Layout and support

18 Can you please describe your physical music classroom layout?

---

---

---

---

---

19 Is there anything that could be done to help improve your classroom layout?

---

---

---

---

---

## VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

20 The following three questions have to do with support. Please choose the response that best reflects your experiences.

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Frequently (4)	Always (5)
Do you feel that you have support from your administration? (1)	<input type="radio"/>				
Do you feel that you have support from your coworkers? (2)	<input type="radio"/>				
Do you receive classroom support for students with exceptionalities (3)	<input type="radio"/>				

---

21 What does this support look like in your classroom?

---

---

---

---

---

22 Do you have any more information that you would like to add?

---

---

---

# VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATORS

## **Appendix D: Focus Group Script/Guide**

Thanks for agreeing to meet with me about this challenging topic. You can skip any questions you do not wish to answer.

1. How long have you been teaching?
2. What pulled you into the profession initially?
3. You agreed to meet with me today to discuss preventative measures for violence in the classroom and I wonder if you could elaborate on your most vivid memory of that happening?
4. How were these experiences handled?
5. Please elaborate on some measures that could have prevented that incident?
6. Please elaborate on any effects of trauma following a violent event with a student.
7. Do you feel that there are options available to help you to deal with trauma following a violent incident with a student? If so, what are they? If not, what could they be?
8. How might your own teacher training, PD, and professional experiences better prepare you for experiencing and handling violence in your classroom?

**Appendix E: Ethics Approval Letter**



**Interdisciplinary Committee on  
Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR)**

St. John's, NL Canada A1C 5S7  
Tel: 709 864-2561 icehr@mun.ca  
[www.mun.ca/research/ethics/humans/icehr](http://www.mun.ca/research/ethics/humans/icehr)

ICEHR Number:	<b>20222733-ED</b>
Approval Period:	May 16, 2022 – May 31, 2023
Funding Source:	
Responsible Faculty:	Dr. David Buley Faculty of Education
Title of Project:	<i>Violence Against Music Educators</i>

May 16, 2022

Ms. Rosemary Lawton  
Faculty of Education  
Memorial University

Dear Ms. Lawton:

Thank you for your correspondence addressing the issues raised by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR) for the above-named research project. ICEHR has re-examined the proposal with the clarifications and revisions submitted, and is satisfied that the concerns raised by the Committee have been adequately addressed. In accordance with the *Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2)*, the project has been granted *full ethics clearance* for **one year**. ICEHR approval applies to the ethical acceptability of the research, as per Article 6.3 of the *TCPS2*. Researchers are responsible for adherence to any other relevant University policies and/or funded or non-funded agreements that may be associated with the project. If funding is obtained subsequent to ethics approval, you must submit a Funding and/or Partner Change Request to ICEHR so that this ethics clearance can be linked to your award.

The *TCPS2* requires that you **strictly adhere to the protocol and documents as last reviewed** by ICEHR. If you need to make additions and/or modifications, you must submit an Amendment Request with a description of these changes, for the Committee's review of potential ethical concerns, before they may be implemented. Submit a Personnel Change Form to add or remove project team members and/or research staff. Also, to inform ICEHR of any unanticipated occurrences, an Adverse Event Report must be submitted with an indication of how the unexpected event may affect the continuation of the project.

The *TCPS2* requires that you submit an Annual Update to ICEHR before **May 31, 2023**. If you plan to continue the project, you need to request renewal of your ethics clearance and include a brief summary on the progress of your research. When the project no longer involves contact with human participants, is completed and/or terminated, you are required to provide an annual update with a brief final summary and your file will be closed. All post-approval ICEHR event forms noted above must be submitted by selecting the **Applications: Post-Review** link on your Researcher Portal homepage. We wish you success with your research.

Yours sincerely,

James Drover, Ph.D.  
Vice-Chair, Interdisciplinary Committee on  
Ethics in Human Research

JD/bc

cc: Supervisor – Dr. David Buley, Faculty of Education