

Heavy metal music has negative impacts on youth

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A senior lecturer in [Music Therapy](#) at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, Dr McFerran is immersed in a new study that aims to find out why some young people use heavy metal music in a negative way.

By conducting in-depth interviews with 50 young people aged between 13 and 18, along with a [national survey](#) of 1000 young people, Dr McFerran is looking to develop an [early intervention](#) model that can be integrated into schools to impact positively before behavioral problems occur.

“The mp3 revolution means that young people are accessing music more than ever before and it’s not uncommon for some to listen to music for seven or eight hours a day,” she said.

“Most young people listen to a range of music in positive ways; to block out crowds, to lift their mood or to give them energy when exercising, but young people at [risk](#) of depression are more likely to be listening to music, particularly heavy metal music, in a negative way.

“Examples of this are when someone listens to the same song or album of heavy metal music over and over again and doesn’t listen to anything else. They do this to isolate themselves or escape from reality.

“If this behavior continues over a period of time then it might indicate that this young person is suffering from depression or anxiety, and at worst, might suggest suicidal tendencies.”

Dr McFerran said parents should be aware of their children’s music listening habits, pick up on early warning signs and take early action.

“If parents are worried, they should ask their children questions like – how does that music make you feel? If children say the music reflects or mirrors the way they feel then ask more about what the music is saying,” she said.

“If listening doesn’t make them feel good about themselves, this should ring alarm bells. Alternatively, if parents notice a downturn in their child’s mood after listening to music this is also a cause for showing interest and getting involved.”

As part of her study Dr McFerran is seeking input from [young people](#), particularly those who suffer from depression and anxiety to better understand the affects of heavy metal. She is also interested in hearing from parents along with their teenagers.

Provided by University of Melbourne

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