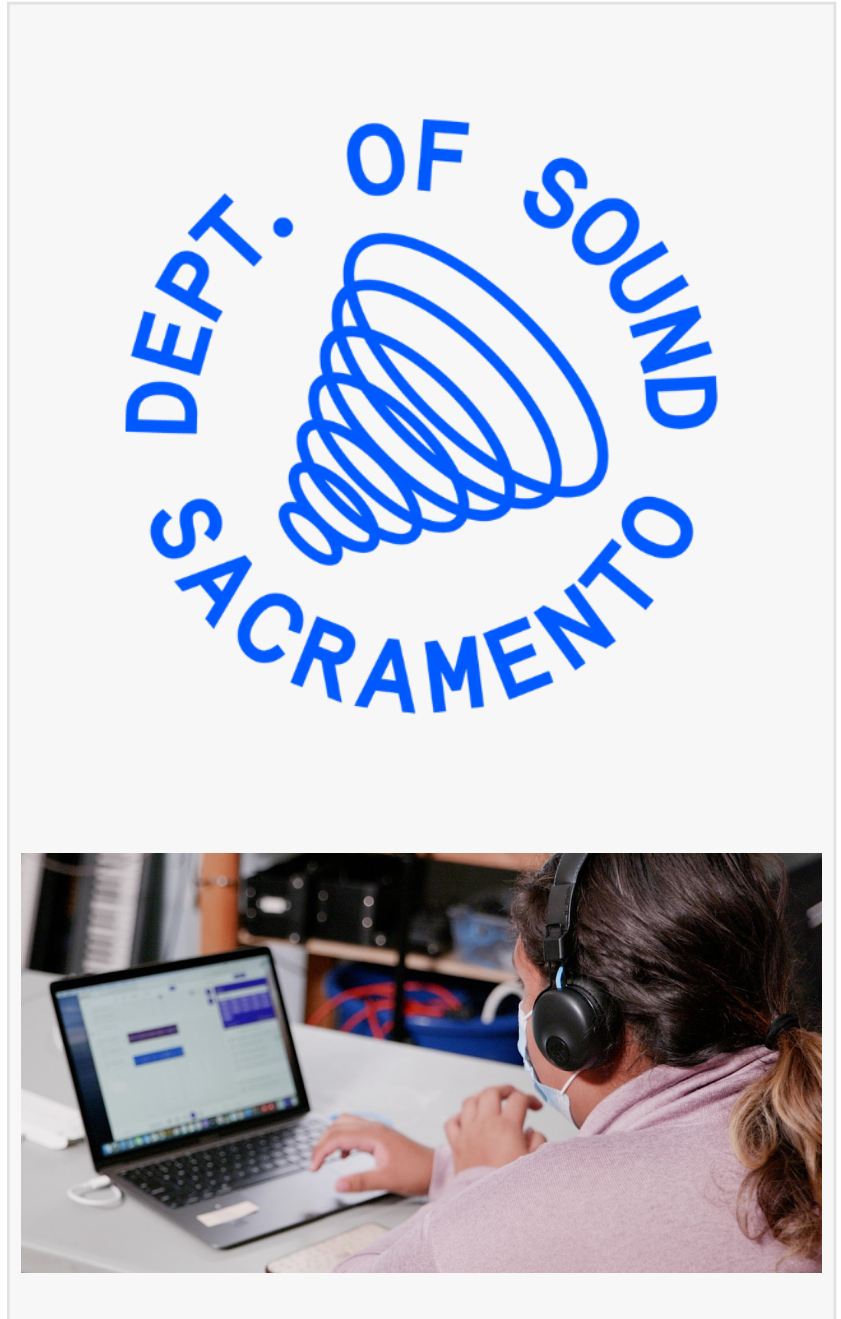


# Dept. of Sound launches Sound Mind Initiative to support the social-emotional health and long-term well-being of youth

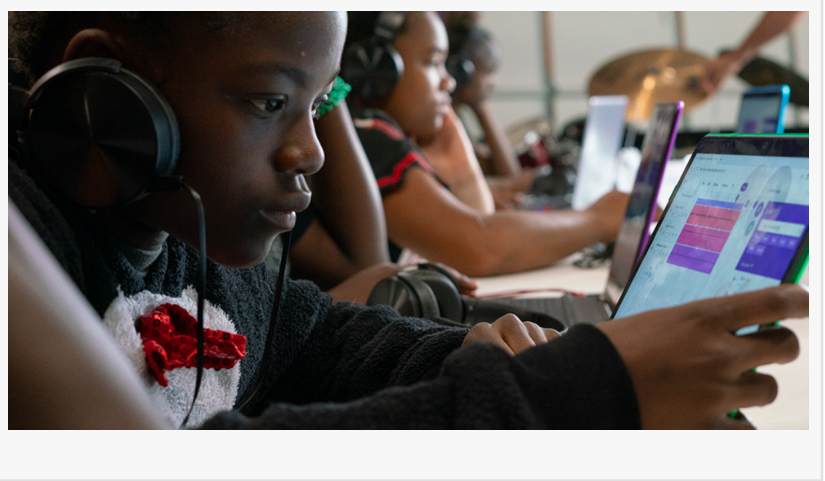
*The Sound Mind Initiative is designed to help address the mental health struggles plaguing young people, through music, podcasting, and the medium of sound.*

SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA, USA,  
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-- Department of Sound

(<https://www.deptofsound.org>) is launching the [Sound Mind Initiative](#), a 5-year plan that harnesses the multifaceted benefits of music and audio production to support youth mental health, mindfulness, and social-emotional wellness. Since its founding in 2018, Dept. of Sound has reached 5,000+ students through its virtual, hybrid, and in-person programming by evolving and responding creatively to the rapidly changing needs of youth in the Sacramento community and beyond. The organization continues to address gaps in access to music and arts education and mental health support by providing free programming and resources in music, podcast production, and audio engineering to students in under-resourced communities in the Sacramento region. Beginning in 2023, Dept. of Sound will officially launch in-person programming in New York City.



In the face of the current mental health epidemic and the escalation of violence across the country, Dept. Of Sound is ensuring its programs are accessible to more youth (ages 9-24) so they can receive the support they urgently need. As emphasized in the U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory (December 2021), the state of youth mental health is an urgent public health crisis and requires immediate action. The Sound Mind Initiative, Dept. of Sound's answer to



this imperative call, is a comprehensive plan that brings music and podcast education into the heart of the community to address the social-emotional needs of young people. The mental health of students is Dept. of Sound's highest priority, with the understanding that a sound mind and meaningful human connection are crucial for creating a positive future, both individually and collectively.

Over the next five years, Dept. of Sound's goal in the greater Sacramento area is to support the social-emotional wellness and development of 25,000 students using a holistic approach and innovative offerings to educate students in music and podcast production and encourage self-expression and creative collaboration. In addition to expanding Dept. of Sound's existing suite of programs, including its 2-year workforce development mentorship program, the Sound Mind Initiative will include music and mental health curricula for schools, mindfulness modules for all programming, and professional development training for music educators on mindfulness techniques and mental health awareness. In addition, the Sound Mind Initiative will include a recurring series of in-person workshops with Dept. of Sound's studio partner, Shattered Records, as well as programming that brings a professionally-equipped mobile recording studio directly to students who would not have access otherwise. Dept. of Sound's programs encourage social connectedness and community engagement activities, which the CDC recommends as key components in addressing mental health challenges and protecting the safety of kids and teens.

From its very beginnings, Dept. of Sound has championed the transformational power of music and sound. John Hamilton Hodgson (Co-founder & CEO) has personally benefited from these expressive outlets and tools, which inspired the creation of the organization: "I started Dept. of Sound in part because of challenges with my own mental health, having been diagnosed with Bipolar II at the age of 25. My diagnosis took me a while to fully accept, but it gave me clarity on how to care for myself. Throughout those difficult times, music was consistently one of my most impactful rituals for centering myself. Whether listening to it, making it, or DJing for people, music has always helped balance me out. I have firsthand experience with the multifaceted therapeutic benefits of music, sound, and creative collaboration, and research continually proves that music and audio engineering are more than just practical skills; they are powerful tools that

can directly help alleviate mental health struggles for youth.”

## About Dept. Of Sound

Department of Sound is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, dedicated to supporting the social-emotional health and long-term well-being of youth through music, podcasting, and the medium of sound.

Founded in 2018 by Sacramento locals John Hamilton and Tyler Garnett, Dept. of Sound is a team composed of artists, music producers, engineers, and entertainment industry leaders who have experienced the life-changing, healing power of music firsthand. We are guided by our deeply held belief that everyone should have access to the multifaceted benefits of artistic self-expression through music and sound. The organization was founded on the principle that access to music and audio should be a community utility, not a luxury – a resource available to all, not just some.

Dept. of Sound’s offerings require minimal technology—students only need headphones, access to an Internet connection, and a smartphone, tablet, or laptop. Many young people lack these resources, therefore priority is given to students who have limited access to technology and music education in daily classes and after-school programs. By facilitating access to sound for young people and helping to make youth voices be heard, we provide a safe space for participants to strengthen their social-emotional skills, express themselves artistically, benefit cognitively and academically, connect with others authentically, and participate in their community in a purposeful way.

Partners include Soundtrap, a Spotify Company; Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation; the Blavatnik Family Foundation; the City and County of Sacramento; the State of California; Kaiser Permanente; Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD); Sacramento Public Library; Fischer Tile; Scholar’s Playground; and more.

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