

# Mental Health and Neurodiversity Discussion Handout

## Instructions

For each of the scenarios below:

- ✓ Identify the issue/s surrounding equity, access, and belonging present in this scenario.
- ✓ Reflect on how this situation may, or may not, be present in your own chorus.
- ✓ Brainstorm a range of possible responses to the scenario. In your chorus, whose responsibility is it to speak up and challenge, or support, the issue presented?
- ✓ Record your conversations and responses for reporting back to the larger group.

## Scenarios for Discussion

1. You are a choral director who has received complaints about a singer who is disruptive: arriving late, misplacing music, fidgeting and moving during rehearsal, and speaking out of turn. The other singers in their section want them reprimanded for being distracting.
2. The costume/attire manager of the Lesbos SSAA chorus gently confronts a young singer in the green room for not following the performance attire protocol. The singer, who identifies as autistic, begins to cry. In an attempt to comfort her, members of her section try to hold and hug her, creating an escalating anxiety attack.
3. A young singer comes out as bipolar during a choir sharing time. The director responds in a private email asking what she needs to know as a director to make the singer's experience smoother and more enjoyable. The director shares the singer's email response with the Membership Committee. As a result, several members of the committee jump in to help and "mother" the singer. Three weeks later, the singer stops attending rehearsals.
4. You are a choral director waiting for your concert to start when one of the soloists says he is having an attack of social anxiety and can no longer perform his solo. You scramble to find another soloist before taking the stage.
5. Your chorus is very socially bonded. Most of the socializing takes place during the 20 minute break during weekly rehearsals. During this time, people gather in the kitchen area, have snacks, and chat with one another. One autistic singer is always standing alone or hovering on the edges of conversation but never speaks up.

## Action Steps

What are some concrete steps your chorus could undertake to make rehearsals, concerts, meetings, and gatherings more welcoming and easier to navigate for neurodivergent individuals?

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