

# How to Handle Stress and Anxiety in Music Production?

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BACHELOR'S THESIS  
May 2024

Degree Programme in Media and Arts  
Music Production

## **ABSTRACT**

Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu  
Tampere University of Applied Sciences  
Degree Programme in Media and Arts  
Music Production

PIISPALA, NIKLAS:

How to Handle Stress and Anxiety in Music Production?

Bachelor's thesis 74 pages, appendices 6 pages  
May 2024

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The music industry does not provide mental healthcare for people working in music production. Everybody must find their own methods and solutions for their mental health problems. Most music producers and audio engineers work individually without a safety net, permanent employment, proper contracts, or legal laws. There is no limit to work hours, projects, or deadlines. Music producers do not have any organised methods to help themselves. Some producers work their whole careers with poor mental health. Nowadays, record companies may offer mental health care to artists but not to music producers. The thesis studied why some music producers suffer from mental pressure in their working careers and how they pursue and sustain their careers with these cognitive challenges. This study aimed to find different methods for music producers to find solutions for the mental health problems in the music industry. Bands, artists, songwriters, AI, etc., have been excluded from the thesis.

As the research method, professional music producers, audio engineers, and a doctor were interviewed to gather qualitative data. In addition to the interviews, the material was collected from books and articles related to the music industry, business, and functional medicine. Even though this thesis provides methods to help the journey to become a healthier music producer, it is not medical research.

This thesis aims to provide helpful information for music producers on dealing with stress and anxiety in music production and maintaining performance and mental health when working under pressure. It provides a practical guide for those finding solutions for mental disorders in music production. The results show how music producers can help themselves for better mental health when working in the music industry and how to find new points of view for better mental health. Creating and maintaining a sense of self-worth, healthy boundaries, proper scheduling, financial management, etc., improves a music producer's mental health and reduces stress.

In conclusion, there are ways to improve music producers' mental health. Even when the industry does not offer healthcare, the music producer must be responsible for creating and complying with their limits. Understanding and discussing the topic with people in the music industry can reduce problems in the industry and give music producers a longer and better working career.

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Key words: mental health, music industry, music producer, music production

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**GLOSSARY**

Plugin (audio)	A software component that processes audio-related functionality.
DAW	A digital audio workstation is software for recording, editing, and producing sound files.
Co-writing	Writing a song in a group for the artist or the band.
Recording	The arrangement captures musical elements using various hardware devices and software, saving them as audio or MIDI data.
Mixing	The individual tracks of a multitrack recording are merged and processed with effects to create the final stereo mix for the song.
Mastering	Is the final step in audio production. It involves making final adjustments to a song to enhance its sound quality, ensure consistency throughout the album, and prepare it for distribution.
A&R	A representative who is responsible for discovering and signing talented emerging artists with a record label or music publisher.
A record label	A music company that manages producing, publishing, distributing, marketing, talent scouting, artist development, and contracts.
Music publisher	A company that specialises in producing, marketing and distributing music.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis is about the producers and audio engineers who are working in the studio and suffer from poor mental health in the music industry. No one can live a perfect and healthy life, but everyone can enhance their quality of life. Research methods were combined with interviews with professional music producers, audio engineers, and a doctor to gather qualitative data. In addition to the interviews, the material was collected from books and articles related to the music industry, business, and functional medicine. This thesis is not about the mental health of people working as live engineers, artists, bands, and songwriters. Artificial Intelligence is not part of this thesis because it has yet to be effective, and there is not enough information about how it will affect the producers' work.

Every producer has a unique income angle for work. Competition is more complicated than ever. Nowadays, everybody has the opportunity to become a music producer. Popular hit songs can be created with a laptop, an audio interface, and a microphone. Many music producers are working hard to get a record label contract and to be the hottest and most famous producer of the century. The music producers are ready to do anything to succeed and get into the music business. Without experience and knowledge, they are easily pulled to the eye of the storm of the music industry. The long working days, lack of time limits, and poor contracts. Stressful projects with unrealistic requirements and expectations. The signs of burnout are beginning to emerge. The company does not offer healthcare, so the music producer must solve the problem themselves.

This thesis provides a practical guide for finding methods and solutions for mental disorders in music production. The results show how music producers can help themselves improve their mental health when working in the music industry and how to find new points of view. To improve a music producer's mental health and reduce stress, the music producer must create and maintain a strong sense of self-worth, healthy boundaries, proper scheduling, financial management, etc.

## **2 INSTRUCTION OF THE INTERVIEWEES**

For this thesis, I interviewed professional music producers with experience in the music industry. They have worked with musicians, artists, songwriters, A&R, and record companies. These professionals have experienced different experiences in their work and developed themselves along the way. Among the interviewees is a general medicine specialist. The professionals are listed below, along with information about their backgrounds.

## 2.1 Jurek Reunamäki

Simo Jurek Reunamäki (PICTURE 1) is a Finnish music producer, musician, composer, and lyricist. Jurek's educational background includes studies in film sound at a vocational school.

His professional journey significantly turned in 2011 when he interned at Kaiku Entertainment, guided by Pekka Ruuska. Jurek's portfolio includes notable albums by artists such as Antti Tuisku, Janna, Johanna Kurkela, Disco, Jesse Kauranta, and Erin.

In recognition of his achievements, Jurek was nominated for the 2015 Producer of the Year Emma Award. Notably, in February 2018, he was honoured with the Producer of the Year Emma Award for outstanding contributions in 2017. (Teosto 2015 & Yle 2018.)



PICTURE 1. Jurek Reunamäki, Music producer (Pasi Kostiainen 2020)

## 2.2 Hiili Hiilesmaa

Hiili Hiilesmaa (PICTURE 2) is a Finnish musician, producer, mixer, and recording artist. He has produced albums for globally successful bands such as The 69 Eyes, Apocalyptica, HIM, Moonspell, Negative, Ensiferum, and Sentenced. The abovementioned band albums boast a collective global sales figure exceeding five million copies, spanning projects in over 20 countries.

In addition to his production prowess, Hiilesmaa has showcased his musical talents by playing the drums in Road Crew, Kypck and keyboards in East Germany. Presently, he serves as the lead singer for The Skreppers.

At Tampere University of Applied Sciences, he shares his knowledge and mentors aspiring producers. (Hiilihiilesmaa.net 2023.)



PICTURE 2. Hiili Hiilesmaa, Music producer (Ville Välimäki 2018)

### 2.3 Tuomo Niemelä

Tuomo Niemelä (PICTURE 3) was a musician who played an essential role in Oulu's rock culture during the 1980s and 1990s. (Kaleva.fi 2009.)

With over a decade of experience, he is a seasoned general medicine expert focusing on occupational health care. His areas of proficiency include healthcare tailored for musicians, addressing musculoskeletal symptoms, and addressing mental health concerns. (Terveystalo.com 2024.)



PICTURE 3. Tuomo Niemelä, Doctor & Musician (Kaleva.fi 2009)

## 2.4 Jussi Jaakonaho

Jussi Jaakonaho (PICTURE 4) is a Finnish guitarist, record producer, mixer, and recorder. He has contributed his musical talents to various bands, including Jonna Tervomaa, Siiri Nordin, Tuure Kilpeläinen, The Latebirds band, and Trio Paula Vesala. His recognition as a producer grew significantly in 1998 when he produced Jonna Tervomaa's debut album. Since then, he has maintained a consistent pace, making an average of two full-length albums annually.

In addition to his prolific production career, Jaakonaho has shared his expertise as a lecturer at institutions such as the Sibelius Academy, Tampere University of Applied Sciences, Helsinki Pop & Jazz Conservatory, and Tampere Conservatory.

In 2004, Jaakonaho earned the Producer of the Year title at the Finnish Grammy Awards (Emma Awards). (Jussijaakonaho.com 2020.)



PICTURE 4. Jussi Jaakonaho, Music producer (Tero Ahonen 2016)

## 2.5 Jyrki Tuovinen

Jyrki Tuovinen (PICTURE 5) is a Finnish musician who has been a producer, mixer, and audio engineer since 1994. He has worked with Lordi, Apulanta, and Suburban Tribe and is also one of the founders of Fried Music. (Discogs.com 2023 & Riffi.fi 2017.)



PICTURE 5. Jyrki Tuovinen, Music producer (Toni Härkönen 2018)

## 2.6 Simeon Puukari

Simeon Puukari (PICTURE 6) is a Finnish songwriter and producer. He has worked with Marc Benjamin, Francis On My Mind, and Stig. Simeon focuses on pop music and has releases on labels such as Spinnin' Records, Universal Music, Protocol Recordings, and Future House Music. Also, he is working at Finnish leading independent music publisher Elements. (Elementsmusic.fi 2022 & Artmusicmediaweek.wordpress.com 2022.)



PICTURE 6. Simeon Puukari, Music producer (Simeon Puukari n.d.)

### 3 WHAT IS A MUSIC PRODUCER

A music producer assists in bringing an artist's vision to life by guiding their sound throughout the music project. The producer is responsible for scheduling a recording session within the appointed budget and efficiently leading the musicians through that schedule. Additionally, the producer guarantees the project's successful technical and artistic completion. (Berklee Online 2020.)

The producer must have musical imagination, visionary opinions, project management skills, and the ability to solve various problems. The producer's role is similar to that of a coach who tries to motivate those involved in the work to give their best. In the field of popular music, professional success as a producer is, on an individual level, somewhat dependent on trends and, therefore, partly coincidental. The music industry is sometimes an organism paced by absurd logic, where reason, talent, and determination suddenly have nothing to do with success. (Jaakonaho 2015.)

#### 3.1 A music producer is multi-skilled

"The everyday life of a producer is multitasking and hustling" - Jonas Olsson.

In the music industry, it is typical for each creator to have their own company if they are not working for a large record company or organisation. In the company as well, the authors are involved in various cost or management deals. The authors are not the company's clients but a network community. Big record companies attach production companies to themselves and the artists. Smaller production companies are more approachable and closer to changes and new things in music-making. When the responsibility of the search is more widely distributed, good people and artists can be found faster. (Olsson 2020.)

The term producer is not entirely unambiguous and often requires a definition because the same word is used for different job descriptions. The producer can mean an artistic, financial, or technical producer. For example, when agreeing on commissions, it is essential for the parties involved to understand what is included

in the producer's job description and what is not. In today's pop productions, the producer also actively participates in songwriting. This applies especially to the co-writing method used in pop music, where the producer or tracker creates notes, harmony, and beats as part of a team and programs them into a unified background. More often, artists also want a producer who is more than just a "rec-button pusher". (Olsson 2020.)

In addition to my own studio work, I have engaged in purposeful marketing and active communication in many directions, for example, with various potential partners at lunch. A&Rs meet producers because they are also interested in new types. I had collaborated with Jens Bogren, among others. If there is a one-sided relationship, it is so-called cold contact. Both parties do not necessarily have something to give each other. Later, the right network is formed when the right contacts come into play. You are no longer the guy that no one knows, but everyone already has some kind of idea about you as a person. Usually, if you start doing and keep people aware of what you know and do, the right people will be found over time. You won't get anywhere by waiting. (Olsson 2020.)

One of the producer's tasks is casting: what kind of group of people does the producer gather around him to do the project? Successful casting makes the success of the record more likely than failure. Even after casting and material choices, the producer's work is, as a rule, a broad spectrum of different concrete decisions. Potential opportunities, as well as restrictions, limit the spectrum of choices. The song's tempo, key and instrumentation are selected for the actual material. We choose the sounds, recording methods and locations, and played takes. In practice, all solutions go through the producer's vision. The band needs clarifying opinions and help. An adequately chosen producer can better see the band's weaknesses and strengths than the band itself. Let's emphasise the emphasis and sweep the weaknesses under the carpet. We make a band or an artist seem better and more talented than they are. The producer is only helpful if he is allowed to do his work. If the artist's trust in the producer is at a level where he wants to keep all the strings in his own hands, in practice, he dilutes the producer's work. There are logistical, materialistic, artistic, and psychological determinants. The budget and deadline are very concrete limits to work. The psychological bubbles of the working group bring their own twist to the overall production.

The producer's trump card is tactical honesty and emphasises information—the producer hovers between the record company and the artist, which can sometimes be quite a minefield. (Jaakonaho 2015.)

I don't live by producing only because I am a multitasker. I've played, mixed, produced. Producing is just one part of what I do. Other jobs help to make ends meet. This way, there is no pressure to produce. Today, one person can be the same author, whereas before, the responsibility was shared with many people and authors. (Jaakonaho 2024.)

### **3.2 The producer's role in making music**

The producer has traditionally been responsible for recording and technical solutions related to the sound world. The Tracker producer's job description is broader, including recording and participating in songwriting. Olsson's production method has always been that, in addition to recording, he has gone through lyrics and melodies with bands and developed them further with the band. Olsson became a tracker producer when his interest in writing songs grew, and he discovered that he could program instrumental templates, i.e., compose a song from the beginning by himself without a band. Writing and production go so hand in hand in contemporary pop music that sometimes the production or the entire song may be born from just one track. (Olsson 2020.)

### **3.3 What kind of competence does the producer need?**

The producer must be good with people because working in the industry is difficult if the producer does not understand what the artist needs. You can learn everything else, but it's harder to influence your own personality. The producer must also be entrepreneurial and able to do many things simultaneously. A busy life and moving many things forward simultaneously require good stress tolerance from the producer. (Olsson 2020.)

The skills necessary for music production include a psychological eye and the ability to collaborate with different people and groups, such as musicians, artists, songwriters, etc. (Jaakonaho 2015.)

The producer must be a good connoisseur of people. The topics often relate to someone's difficult experiences and may be discussed for days. At the same time, commercial realities and brutality are also on display. Sociability and emotional sensitivity are needed for that job. (Reunamäki 2017.)

### **3.4 What kind of technical equipment does a producer need?**

The producer needs a good laptop, speakers, and software for producing. In addition to these, high-quality headphones are good. (Olsson 2020.)

Many industries have undergone rapid digital transformation, and the music industry is no exception. Nowadays, everything is digital, and one person can create a product that used to require several people. All you need to produce content is a laptop and a microphone. Distribution has also become more accessible and affordable than ever. (Tuovinen 2024.)

### **3.5 What is the producer's income generation like?**

Olsson estimates that about one-third of his income comes from Teosto's accounts and two-thirds from the company's operations. The producer also receives Gramex payments for the instrument and vocal tracks. The shares vary yearly depending on how many songs he writes and how much material he produces for artists' recordings. As a rule, work as a pop producer comes through songs. That is, if the record company decides that the track made by the producer is good, he usually gets to finish producing the song. A long experience in the field increases the producer's reliability. A producer is chosen more easily if he has evidence of acting responsibly and completing numerous projects. If it is a producer who has just started his career, Olsson advises him to make a lot of songs in which he is the tracker producer and to sell his expertise through work. When working under a company name, I could work for 8 hours on band work and train my songwriting skills in the evening. One day off could fit into three weeks; a 10-hour working day was the minimum. Nowadays, there might be three meetings in the morning, followed by lunch. After that, I might record four hours of songs. There is no one way to become a producer. It's a long road to building relationships of trust. (Olsson 2020.)

### **3.6 What should a producer know about release schedules?**

Larger record companies usually need a finished song six weeks before the release date. The earlier the song is ready, the easier it is to market the publication to other players. The producer must ensure the song is ready quickly. By working in the field, you learn how much time each work phase requires and what you need to know how to prepare for among different factors. It's good to know that, for example, people who focus on promotion in their work don't necessarily know how long it takes for the various stages of production. The production schedule may include so-called intermediate deadlines, by which the final lyrics should be ready, for example, or a timeline for a music video. The producer's task is to coordinate with many operators and ensure the schedule is kept. When the release is approaching, the producer usually takes care of the record company's so-called label copy, which lists who played on the recording, wrote the songs, and published or published it. (Olsson 2020.)

In summary, the role of a producer requires a wide range of skills, and their income comes from various sources. The producer needs to have vision, emotions, and the ability to keep the project on track until completion. The competition in this field is more challenging than ever, so producers must continuously update and refine their skills to remain competitive. Even if the producer is proficient with technology and production, it will not replace communication and social skills, which are much more essential skills in the music industry.

## **4 WHAT CAUSES STRESS AND ANXIETY IN MUSIC PRODUCTION**

There are many different stress factors in the music industry. This thesis divides stress factors into four groups for easier understanding.

1. Technical side
2. Artistic side
3. Economic side
4. Interaction, interpersonal skills, and health

### **4.1 Technical side**

#### **4.1.1 The equipment**

Your stress levels will rise when you do not know how your equipment works. If you haven't used the studio before, everything there is new to you. You need to gain experience with the gear you will use there. You must be confident enough in the studio that you are using. The studio is the producer's instrument, so you can use the studio that is familiar to you or learn to use the new studio. Artists think and assume that the producer knows everything and can do everything. If it's an unknown studio, this is where you can trap yourself if you are not familiar with the equipment, etc. The studio is the producer's instrument; it is better understood. Nothing is more stressful than when the client is breathing down your neck while you struggle with a technical problem. Be prepared for the device to break or not suit your needs. If possible, please have some spare devices and accessories. The music producer must also maintain their knowledge of the equipment. (Hillesmaa 2024.)

#### **4.1.2 Templates for the help**

In audio engineering, templates are pre-made sessions for a DAW with tracks and plugins already inserted. These plugins often have customised settings made on them, and the tracks are labelled and well-organized, with all the routing already done. When you open up a template, you can immediately begin working

on songwriting, producing, recording, mastering, or mixing without spending time on the initial setup. (Gospelproducers.com 2022.)

The imported template settings may not be perfect, but this starting point will save you time. Spend less time tweaking and more time creating. (Produce-likeapro.com 2020.)

I spent a lot of time working on songwriter demos. I worked from 8 in the morning until 11 at night. My wife and children were not always happy with me being away. So I made two decisions. Firstly, I chose to focus on mixing. Secondly, I wanted to be home in time for dinner and not spend hours recalling the console, setting up outboards, etc. I realised I could set up faster, recall everything 100 % faster, and easily move from one song to the next using Pro Tools and templates. When I started working on mixing music, I realised that I could significantly speed up my mixing process by utilising templates and began developing them. After 15 years of tweaking, my current template is the result. I now consider my templates as an electronic assistant. I can load up a song and start mixing in just a few minutes. It only takes a few minutes to complete all of that, so I have already saved two hours by avoiding setting up the mixing console. Of course, my template may not be suitable for every session, but it works for the most part. My template tracks come pre-loaded with my preferred plug-ins, and I am already 85–90 % done and ready to start mixing. (Billy Decker 2018.)

Efficient work is just as crucial for a successful career. It allows you to:

1. Earning more for every hour you invest is essential, especially if you're a solopreneur.
2. Working with more clients within the same timeframe can generate additional exposure, put your name on the map, and vastly expand your network in the music industry.
3. Achieving a healthy work-life balance is crucial, whether you're a full-time or part-time engineer. You want to be able to spend time with friends and family or go out sometimes.

4. Ensuring client satisfaction is key to having happier and returning clients. By making them feel looked after and achieving the exact sound they envisioned, you increase the chances of them speaking highly of you and hiring you for future projects. However, if you're charging a fixed rate and have already spent 10 hours on your initial mix, providing attended review sessions or going through multiple iterations of revisions can seem unfeasible. By earning more for every hour you invest, you'd be free to spend extra time with the client and ensure they're perfectly happy with the final mix. (Promixacademy.com n.d.)

In summary, the producers must stay updated and maintain their knowledge of their equipment. The better prepared you and your equipment are before a performance; the smoother the sessions will run. Creating templates for mixing, mastering, recording, songwriting, and production can help streamline the process. Allowing extra time for equipment setup and testing before the sessions is beneficial if working in a studio. This allows the producer to identify and address equipment issues before clients arrive. Being prepared and staying one step ahead is key.

## **4.2 Artistical side**

### **4.2.1 Client's materials**

A lot of stress comes from the player or singer who can't play the instrument or sing well enough. The song is cliché or poor. The client is talentless; there's bad timing and tune. You must remember that it's work, not your whole life, and that's fine. The music producer is not responsible if the clients don't practise enough for the sessions, even if they promise to. (Hiilesmaa 2024.)

The problem with co-write sessions is that generic songs are created. Songwriters make a song for someone in just a few hours, but whose song is it? We allow the songs to be born, but the output remains generic when no one owns it. The common thing is that creators must feel that songs are their own. If not, you can hear it in the product. This is how pseudo-music is easily made when none of the authors own the song. A lot of music is made that nobody owns, and nobody gets

feedback on it. It just becomes a lot of such an audio mass, but businesses don't think about that. They think a certain amount of music must be published, whether good or not. Individual work is not essential as long as we do a lot of projects. The creators are responsible for being excited and doing their best. Doing a lot of songs is fulfilling a duty and getting money. A certain self-respect is required. You don't have to make a profit and money like that. Music touches you much more if you love what you do. (Tuovinen 2024.)

#### **4.2.2 Battle of the minds**

It happens to everyone sometimes: the joy of making music disappears, and you forget why you started in the first place. One of the most essential things I remember when I started at Kaiku was Pekka Ruuska's wise words: "Keep your eye on the ball—The ball is a song". Focus on the content and the song, and be passionate about making music. Everything else is noise and byproduct. Success and money will come if you focus on doing; that's the point. A career and fame are byproducts of what you really want to do. Passion and love are the best partners with music. Sometimes, breaking away from the pressure of success can be difficult. It's a nonsensical superpower if you don't care about the fame, money, and opinions of what others are saying. You should create a positive bubble where all the alerts can be left to the outside and where you can focus on making music. Remember a hobbyism, i.e., why did you get excited to make music in the first place, etc. It's essential to remember the childlike enthusiasm and curiosity. For some, the enthusiasm remains until the grave. When curiosity and love wear off from making music, it's worth ending the career. Many also forcefully press even though there is no curiosity anymore. They keep making music for the wrong reasons. It's essential to know how to stop and to introspect yourself enough. (Reunamäki 2024.)

The music industry is so mindless that depression and sadness can be an insanely good brand for an artist. You can get inspiration and peer support through the artist's music and feelings. It can become a prison or a vicious circle that you have to be depressed to be able to sell and brand music. A challenge when a serene phase begins in life and no more music is born. Music starts to suffer

when the songs are boring because there are no problems where to get inspiration. Problems and bad feelings are broken down into songs. Let's start looking for experiences where to get material for songs. It's a difficult industry for some artists because it can be harmful to maintain problems for inspiration. (Reunamäki 2024.)

The most significant source of anxiety is the industry's uncertainty. It's difficult to manage finances and maintain a sense of self-worth. The music industry is competitive; even if your career is successful, you still doubt your survival. Uncertainty is the most significant factor for mental health problems, but a good song gives hope for the future. Sometimes, I feel like the best producer in the world, and sometimes I feel I should quit. However, I've gotten more than it has taken away. The more you enjoy the process, the better you will be. The end result does not determine what you should do. Good things are found through trial and error. You must trust and have fun doing it, even if you don't immediately think it is good enough. It can easily be transmitted to the product if you are not feeling good. Sometimes, there are bad experiences, but those who return to the studio are the ones who separate the grains from the chaff. We try to make working as pleasant as possible, and we should not be ashamed of that sense of fun so that the work is not pressed into any mould. You have to dare to be an artist and a creator. (Puukari 2024.)

How I have survived anxiety and stress. I've been going one day at a time. You must accept that the rest of the world does not agree with your choices. You have to find nice things about your own work. Small things and successes feel good. Playfulness and a certain level of levity heal the soul and help you overcome difficulties. If you poison yourself in the bar, the wasted time and energy detract from creativity. (Tuovinen 2024.)

All social media services should be destroyed for comparison. At high speed, you may become blind and cynical. At the same time, the pressure to succeed all over again can easily confuse the head. Success breeds success, and eyes often turn in the same direction in a small country. I have never been stressed about living as long as I have lived on something. I realised I hadn't done anything but odd jobs at some point. When you have reached the level where you can succeed,

your self-esteem and insecurity become such that you don't need to brag about anything. (Reunamäki 2017.)

### **4.2.3 Stand out in the crowd**

If all thoughts go to pleasing others, it is the road to destruction. If the clients like your style, use that for their project. Attitude, risk-taking, and a strong personality willing to experiment are valued. Be in the business, be there with a hammer, and destroy every rule and thought. Be unique enough. It is disastrous if you have all the same things that others have, e.g., plugins, software, etc. Dare to sound different than everybody else. For example, Arto Tuunela did his own thing and eventually ended up making other people's records and music. Conscious risks can be taken in one's own projects, but they cannot necessarily be used in the client's projects. Product development must exist, from which the best ones are selected for series production. Make weird music, and someone will get excited and use it for popular music. The best thing is combining these, making something your own, and adding that style to popular music. (Hiilesmaa 2024.)

Spotify's top 50 is similar music—similar material is a safe bet for success. Big and successful things are unusual. They are unique, and they are not identical copies. Making decisions and being brave enough to take risks in creating the music is the key to success. (Tuovinen 2024.)

In summary, producers must have good self-esteem and confidence in their actions and survival. Being a producer is like an endurance sport; the road is long and requires patience. It is vital for producers not to compare themselves with others, as everyone has a unique career. They should focus on creating music without being distracted by thoughts of success or other people's opinions. Producers need to understand that music projects are part of their lives and that those projects do not define them as a person.

## **4.3 Economic side**

Stress and anxiety are born from many things, including the constant uncertainty of livelihood. Staying on the field is a real challenge, as is knowing how to be

there. It hasn't been years that I haven't been a little worried about how to secure a living when I have a family, etc. Keeping your career continuum is a complicated thing. Economic realities have changed; being a producer can easily be the worst-paid job in the industry. The industry changes quickly and a lot, bringing challenges and putting pressure on the producer. Luckily, I did not feel like I was competing with anyone and did not chase hits or success. (Jaakonaho 2024.)

There are side paths and other work where you can get work and money. Mixing is much easier and requires different skills than producing. The production is already on track when mixing. A mixer can have a longer and more successful career than a producer because there can be more and different types of tracks. A producer can be profiled in one genre, while a mixer can work with various music genres. (Jaakonaho 2024.)

I have experienced pressure. Finance, livelihood and how to pay rent and loans are at the centre of the pressures. The pressure came when the thought came that you must work day jobs and make music while doing it. The day job wears you down, and you can't develop in music. The pressure comes from the surrounding society and how to get by financially. I have had to build my own life into my own work career. It took ten years to find a client base on which I could build my own life. You have to have endurance if you want to live with music. The competition is even tougher abroad. (Tuovinen 2024.)

#### **4.3.1 Salary and contracts**

It is difficult to price yourself and your work at the beginning of your career; every project is unique. The idea is that the client relationship is strange when you have initially worked with friends. You need to know how to turn this into a client relationship. The client pays the salary, whether he is a friend or not. When starting a client relationship, a good arsenal of questions must be present so that you can have a realistic idea of the project and set the proper rates. You must find out what the deal includes; otherwise, you might be held hostage. You'll need to secure your side, so make a contract for the project. When will you get paid, and when the project is done, who will be responsible for the project and payment? What if the band ends its career before you get the project ready? Who will pay

you then? You have done a lot of work for nothing. That's why you must get a salary, or even half before you start working on the songs. If it's a bad deal, don't do it. (Hiilesmaa 2024.)

For a better industry, Spotify's income distribution should be rationalised. Artists should get more money from record sales to make records more rational. There would be no rush; music would improve, workers would feel better, and the audience would get a better result. (Hiilesmaa 2024.)

It's easy to say that when you are successful, you don't need to think about money, but it's more difficult at the beginning when your career is just starting. I am lucky that I can do and develop my own work and make songs as long as it takes; everything else will come by itself. Whenever things stress and bother you, do something nice: organise the sample folder, download the new plugin, or do something completely separate from work. (Reunamäki 2024.)

Accumulating an income stream is essential. Small cash flows come from many different projects, which will help in the future; it's an investment. You should never do free work. Which says I'll pay you something, or you'll get a percentage of this, but it is not enough. Never take streaming income as a salary; rather, Teosto and Gramex. If I do something musical for the song, I must be honest and dare to ask for Teosto and Gramex credits from the client. Smart outsource monitoring to the aforementioned. It pays to make an income stream and develop it. Big companies have budgets. Monitor the amount of work that you do yourself. It's not worth working for a commission salary. There must be a clear job role and workload. The price is based on the amount of work. You have to know the right price for the used working hours. The wrong salary will not compensate for the time spent. Tools and expenses must also be paid for and paid for with work. Make sure you start accumulating money. You should be aware of sources of income. There's no point in chasing quick wins. You must be ready to consider ten years of work and the income it brings, divide and invest the income, and devise a plan to start the turnover. (Tuovinen 2024.)

The authors are paid so little that they are suffering. The field is very business-oriented. The cheaper it can be done, the better, in the company's opinion. Album

budgets and production costs have remained the same, even though everything else has become more expensive. The industry is fragmented, and the companies are used to exploiting employees who are doing music as a passion. (Tuovinen 2024.)

Incoming employees are compensated less, which is normal. Of course, quality always pays, no matter what you do. You have to dare to ask and have self-knowledge and self-worth. Self-boosting is essential, and you must realise that I am worth this. At first, of course, it's more complicated. You think you are considered difficult when you ask for money or a higher salary. People appreciate doing your own thing and not doing it for free or too cheaply. If it does not fit or work, we don't belong together. If the client wants a zero budget for the project, he gets the production he deserves. If there is no money in the game, the client does not dare invest in it either. When the client spends money on their project, the client is committed to the project. Commitment is different if it is done for free. You have to have self-worth and say I need this much salary for the working hours. Self-esteem and work well-being skills could be taught more and developed. I have sufficient self-esteem and confidence to say that my services cost this much. Price yourself realistically and have the confidence to ask for money. It tells them they can trust you, and things will get done. Endurance and well-being at work are essential, as are survival and staying on your feet. I don't use social support networks because you are always counted as an entrepreneur, which means working with Kela is difficult. There are no lobbyists in the industry who would lobby or engage in informal negotiations to influence decisions. Information flows, but no one is going to change money things. (Tuovinen 2024.)

Producers' and audio engineers' financial and money management skills could improve. They often have a lot of money at one time, and it is easily wasted. They should be able to see further and use their salary wisely. Producers need to learn how to look further into the future; honey time only lasts a while. They must prepare for years or seasons when it is quieter. (Hiilesmaa 2024.)

In summary, it can be challenging to determine the value of one's work, especially if the producer has worked for a low fee or even for free. This mindset needs to change so that individuals receive fair compensation for their work. If a producer

is unsure about how much to charge for a project, they can seek advice from a colleague. The colleague can also review the contract to ensure its safety before signing. Producers need to practice saving a portion of their income for unforeseen circumstances rather than spending it all immediately. It's crucial to ensure that you are fairly compensated for your skills and work by establishing a contract that outlines the price and payment schedule.

#### **4.4 Interaction, interpersonal skills, and health**

##### **4.4.1 How to work with the client?**

The best way to think of a client is as a pseudo-friend. Get alongside the client, but do not be too close. Have your personal space, and do not let anyone call in the middle of the night about the project. Every person is different; you can never know what people are like. The best way is to do a risk analysis. Know everything about the client and do the job of the detective. Google the client, check their social media, and call the producer who worked with them before. The more information you have about the client's old projects, the better. You know how to prepare for what's coming. For example, if you plan to hike, you must calculate whether you can do a 50—or 10 km walk and what equipment is needed. There will always be bumps in the road, whether the client is good or bad. (Hiilesmaa 2024.)

The singer or bass player comes to the studio after work to do their parts of the record. They sing or play their part for four hours and then leave the studio. The producer is there in the morning to set up all the equipment. After the recording session, the producer stays in the studio to edit and tear down the equipment. The producer concentrates on work all day. Sometimes, you must explain this to the clients so that they understand your side of the work. If they don't understand, it's better not to continue working with them. (Hiilesmaa 2024.)

For example, the risks are high when the client has a lot of money, works alone, does not have experience, and has bad interaction skills. As a producer, you act as a mirror; if you comment that the song is not good, it can be a tough place for a client. The client buys services, but the interaction is not genuine. The client

wonders if the service is worth the money. If money and big contracts are involved, the producer may have to pay fines without having any influence on the result. The producer is responsible and can easily become a spittoon. (Hiilesmaa 2024.)

You have to know how to say it won't work if you feel even a little bit like things aren't working, and there may be pitfalls in the background. Two options to skip the projects if the risks are too high:

1. Pricing is so high that no offer is accepted.
2. Claim that you are too busy to make it.

My terms for getting things done are healthy boundaries that improve self-esteem. At first, you have to do more, pay the tuition fees, but little by little, you improve your situation. Like a band, they start from the ground up towards bigger opportunities. In job satisfaction research, it has been noticed that one's opportunities for influence within one's work are significant. (Hiilesmaa 2024.)

The producer is a professional who knows when the shoal is approaching. The producer is a pilot who can see when turbulence is coming. The producer can read the situation and can suggest a break. The producer knows something will happen and suggests fastening the seat belts. Producers can read a client and lead them to start from a more accessible tune to get them easily started. The producer knows the most difficult places and can read the situation. We do something easy for the start, which drips stress. Anticipate as in health care. Let's go to the dentist before the hole comes. (Hiilesmaa 2024.)

If you have to produce a result, the pressure increases. You have to produce results or else you will be out of the projects. It increases the pressure if there are ten other factors you have to compete with. If you don't do well, you are replaced. The pressure that you want to be part of the next album. Well-being is not recognised, and producers must cope with the survival threat. Not everyone can always have a good day, and being sensitive is punished. No one can open themselves up because that means that you are the weakest link and not strong enough for

the team. You get a penalty for being sensitive. The cure is a pseudo-friend mentality. You're in a team and pushing through, but in reality, you're just at work. Mindset: Give it your all and do as well as you can, but don't drive yourself out of your mental limits at work. (Hiilesmaa 2024.)

The more business-oriented the pattern, the less recognisable it is.

1. Side: The hobby base is done slowly and comfortably.
2. Side: The record company's way to do is the toughest and quickest, which results must be sold. They are not interested in the producer's feelings.

The artist talks for many hours about his visions, so in return, the producer has the right to discuss money and deals. Saying no does not always mean the end, and serving all clients is unnecessary. If an experience of the project has been negative, etc., the price will be raised or not done. If the client doesn't have money now, we will do it when they have money. Willingness to pay is not always the same as ability to pay. The album's budget has been exceeded; it cannot be paid; it must be adjusted. A big company does not always guarantee money; they can't be trusted. Make a contract and set the late payment interest high. The producer is not responsible for communicating with the record company, A&R, band, or artist. (Hiilesmaa 2024.)

Self-protective procedures and a sense of self-worth. If I feel like I will be in the position of a dog, I am not interested in the project. The most essential thing is music, but there's no point in losing your sanity. You can say thank you, but I am not interested. Someone always talks bad about you, and someone always talks good about you. If you are honest and open, good things will be said about you, but you cannot influence everyone. You can't please everyone. (Jaakonaho 2024.)

If the project is annoying as hell, and you know it, it's worth considering whether it's worth it. You can't always know, and it's not always worth committing to for a long time. Let's commit to one song first versus the whole album. Time and money will be saved, and you won't get trapped. The first version should be close to what

is being sought. If the employment relationship is too difficult, leave it at that. If you're the wrong mixing engineer for that project, there will be too many bad things and adjustments. You can say to find someone else to do it if it's difficult. Sometimes, clients don't know what they want; it's their unprofessionalism. (Jaakonaho 2024.)

We often start thinking about when the mix is ready and how to develop it. Producers and mixers can't help it because there are many different levels of clients. You have to adapt within appropriate limits. Clients are instructed on what condition the files should be in because clients do not know what each phase includes. You must draw the line between exactly what is included in this work. Mixing, editing, mastering, and production are all different tasks. Many people have no idea what is involved, so inform the client what is suitable and what is not. The information should be provided actively so that as many people as possible can understand it. It's essential for the producer to see the problems ahead of time and anticipate them. You can never assume anything. You can't assume that things will work out somehow. Clear communication is essential in production. You can't say things too clearly and too often. If you are unclear, you have no one to blame but yourself. You must inform the client of the schedule realities immediately. After the deadline, you won't be able to do this project anymore, and it is no longer your responsibility. Let's go back to the limits, give realistic schedules, and communicate them well in advance. It would be good for the producer to keep the threads in his hands, but it is not an idea to support everything fully. When you say I want to be a pro, I must take a stand and be present. When an artist calls on Sunday evening, you must answer, which you could also do the next day. Social responsibility is the most burdensome. For an artist, the project is the most essential and the only one; for a producer, it is one out of a hundred. (Jaakonaho 2024.)

When you make music for yourself out of passion, it's different when you make music for others for money. You can't fight back; you must accept other people's visions when you get money. You must learn to act as someone expected to be professional, even if you can't make sense of the client's project. The essential thing is that you can somehow utilise your own aesthetics, but don't push it too much. Personally, in the role of producer, you can't inject your own thing or vision

into someone else's music if the client does not want it. As a professional, I wonder if the vocal performance is good even if I can't emotionally relate to the song. More essential is improving the client's vision of the project. Taste is so different for different people. (Tuovinen 2024.)

The typical situation is that when the client requests changes to the production or mixing, I have to immediately go to the studio to do the work because the client asked for it, and the song will be mastered tomorrow. You have to learn to say it won't happen now. The usual response from the client is that you have to do this now. At the last minute, AR or the artist comes up with something that needs to be changed. When a small thing changes, a lot of mixing and adjusting begins again. If you have a sense of self-worth and self-respect, you can say you don't start running because of a project. That's also possible, even if you don't generally think like this, but if you've wanted and your opinion is valued, you can say I can't do this now and say you'll do it later. Other people are messing up the project and making you busy, even though you have done the work on schedule. The deadline comes, and there is a lot of pressure. A&R starts adjusting something about the song's lyrics, etc., and then the other ten people start adjusting and running. A&R could have taken a stand on things five weeks ago when the songs were made, but then, in the final stages, someone will figure out that something must be changed before the song is mastered. As a producer, you can decide whether you want to join this mess. Do I want to be in this position, like service people? If someone gets the feeling, does the producer have to start running? There is a big pressure in the field when the adjustment is arbitrary. You can easily become a rag doll if you give it a chance. A&R should work on time so that last-minute changes would happen. If you give a rope, someone will surely pull on it. And if you start acting like you need more understanding, are you the only troublesome producer now? This is never spoken out loud, which is a taboo in our field. Power relations are a big problem that is not talked about. (Jaakonaho 2024.)

In a co-write group, people write songs with good vibes, and everyone is satisfied. Then, the A&R says that they must make a new chorus part because this one is not good enough. It's incredibly discouraging for creators; it's just an A&R opinion. Everything is done for nothing, or you have to do additional work for free to please the A&R. In the finished mix, A&R says that the chorus part must be sung with a

different text, so they try a new text, but that does not work either. As a producer, you are on a merry-go-round; you must avoid getting into those situations or have a contract with a deadline for editing the song. Remember that they are your pseudofriends clients and not close friends. (Hiilesmaa 2024.)

Efficiency is also idealised too much these days. The idealisation of efficiency has gone to the point that done quickly is good. It can even be seen in the "this song was created in 15 minutes" information from record companies. Although I have said so myself, it is not an absolute value. The song is not good because it was created quickly. It is evaluated with completely different metrics. What makes a song valuable is that it was made with care. (Reunamäki 2017.)

The human angle also affects. Before, ten people in the studio was normal. Nowadays, at most 3–4 people do it, and then someone finishes it alone. This is a big and bad change, in my opinion. The ability to withstand pressure is better when you feel that other people are around and that the stress is distributed among everyone. Before, we mixed and made decisions on the spot. Because it's based on decisions. The pressure comes from having to decide alone. Developing other aesthetics is the producer's responsibility, which track is chosen or the playing part, etc. (Tuovinen 2024.)

Students do not yet know what awaits them. At institutions, music technology is the most focused area of study. We are on our own and find out the hard way that this is how the industry is. Welfare discussions could be held in unions and organisations. The authors should be informed about possible pitfalls. (Jaakonaho 2024.)

No one is prepared for the time after school, no one teaches budgeting, and no one has taught or realised the financial space for the producer. In education, working skills should be given a higher value. Usually, producers do projects too cheaply for friends and get trapped in the limbo of a friend and professional relationship, and talking about money becomes difficult. In your work, it's essential that, at some point, you distinguish where the money comes from. Who pays the bills, and how do you get royalties and income? Agreements must be made, and

you must be ready to discuss if you have done more than what was asked. (Tuovinen 2024.)

In summary, having some safety distance from the client is essential. Like Icaros, if you fly too close to the sun, you will lose your wings and fall. The producer must check the client's background and not assume anything. The producer must inform the clients about their terms, salary, schedule, skills and limits. The producer is the team leader who must anticipate. Do your best, but don't drive yourself out of your limits at work. The producer must have self-protective procedures and a sense of self-worth for a more sustainable career.

#### **4.4.2 Taking care of yourself**

There is no profession where there is no stress at all. Stress is experienced in all jobs, and short-lasting stress can also be called drive. Short-period stress is good when you are working; it makes us perform our best when we are working. Healthy boundaries are the most essential thing for good mental health at work. Money is the second most crucial thing; even that won't save you if someone determines when you can go home from sessions when you work 16-hour days. It quickly burns you out. "Music is my life" is wrong thinking. It should be: "Music is PART of my life". You are an independent being, and your work does not define you; you define yourself. Self-image is challenging to build; for example, singing contest winners already have a planned self-image from the record company. (Hiilesmaa 2024.)

Stress and work pressure exist in all workplaces. They are part of humanity and life. A certain pressure is also sometimes useful. It makes a person functional. Throwing yourself into feelings and sensitivity. Is it an advantage or a disadvantage? If you burn yourself out, the body reacts. But without such qualities, you cannot be in a field that requires emotions and sensitivity. The problems are generally left on one's shoulders and not on the record companies. It's sad that people who are sensitive and then they work in a tough field. You can't just be the Excel guy; you cannot produce music if you are not emotional. (Tuovinen 2024.)

Even if we do art with all our hearts, our whole life does not depend on it. It is easy to say that we put everything on the last card. You must put in as an artist and creator, but you must maintain your sense of worth. It cannot be placed or given to anyone else. Everyone must learn those lessons themselves. (Jaakonaho 2024.)

I've experienced stress and anxiety in music production, and I know where it comes from. Like it or not, all creative work involves a lot of work with your emotional sensitivity and emotional intelligence because it is tied to your mental well-being. If you don't have inspiration, it negatively affects my being. The work aspect multiplies the challenges. As a producer and songwriter, you should be as open, emotionally sensitive, and emotionally intelligent as possible with continuous input. Your work is constantly being criticised by listeners, colleagues, record companies, and A&R. The critical thing is that the identity of the creative author is very strongly tied to his authorship. Exhaustion and anxiety directly affect that whole self-image. That's a massive challenge to working in this field. Life also includes pain and suffering; it's natural. We all have our own problems and phases, regardless of our jobs. (Reunamäki 2024.)

Finding a longer, more sustainable path would be better than a short, unsustainable one. If you burn out, no one benefits, not the record company or the publisher. (Puukari 2024.)

In summary, stress is present in every profession. It is a part of humanity and can help people cope with challenges. However, producers are very sensitive, and prolonged stress is not desirable. Producers must decide and understand their limits to avoid prolonged stress.

#### **4.4.3 Time management**

The most essential thing about taking care of yourself is the limit to taking care of working hours. There must be a vacation for intensive work. Mental recovery is essential for a healthy career. Your brain is a muscle; you can't work out in the gym for eight hours straight. Concentrated work can only be done for a few hours; you must have breaks and some time limit. Eight hours of work, eight hours of

rest, and eight hours of something else is a good memory rule. This also gives a better result when you can concentrate and are more energetic during the sessions. It is also a risk of working hours that are too long; you may have to retake everything because it is noticed that the material is not good enough. (Hiilesmaa 2024.)

Have a good schedule and manage your timetable. You easily say yes to everything and can't deliver on time as promised. When you start a project, you must know if you have time for it. It's not a sprint; it's a marathon. You need to share the speed and power for a more extended trip. You must find the right place and method to get to the finish line. Optimum speed makes you more efficient—potential speed efficiency. You won't catch fish if you don't throw bait in the water, but you don't always have to be fishing. The joy disappears if you are fishing all the time. It would be good to divide the projects into parts, even if the days are sometimes long. In the long run, it would be good to balance the workload and think about how to get creative efficiency from myself, which I enjoy. It is said that we are creative when we are depressed, but I am not creative at that moment. When I am well, I do the best things. (Puukari 2024.)

During an experiment in August 2019, Microsoft's offices closed their doors for Friday, giving all employees an extra day off each week. Although the weekly working hours were dramatically reduced, productivity increased by as much as 40 % compared to last year. In the case of Microsoft, productivity refers to employee-specific sales figures. However, only some things are thanks to the extra day off. Still, in connection with the experiment related to shorter working hours, the staff was told to reduce the time spent on meetings and answering e-mails from working time. (Iltasanomat 2019.)

In summary, a producer should have a work schedule and focus 100 % on the project while working, and then do something else after work to reset their brain. Which option sounds more reasonable? A producer who works 14 hours straight and does something else during the day, like watching YouTube videos. Or a producer who fully focuses on the project for 8 hours a day with breaks and then leaves the studio for other activities. The working times should be realistic for the producers because it helps maintain the balance. The producers must define

healthy boundaries with working time; without that, someone else will define the producer's working time.

#### **4.4.4 Something other than music**

Eight hours to do something else. Some like driving a motorcycle, walking in the forest, gardening, playing golf, or instrument building—something unrelated to music. You must focus on these things. If you don't, your golf swing will be poor. When building instruments, the band saw will cut your fingers. Go hang out with people who aren't into music and talk about something other than music. If you have family and children, spend time with them. (Hiilesmaa 2024.)

Good partners, friends, hobbies, exercise, and a healthy lifestyle are essential. Find another passion, something you can do. I go outside and exercise, and the counterweight is good for relaxation. (Jaakonaho 2024.)

Photography is my way of disconnecting from work. I walk around the city with my old camera and capture moments. Otherwise, I tried to nurture my creativity. Like many other authors, I have moments of despair and fear that new songs will not be born. I try to keep life interesting and meet many kinds of people. The essential thing is to explore and wonder about the world and not fear unpleasant things. I always keep my eyes and ears open. (Reunamäki 2017.)

You must develop new hobbies in addition to music. Overall well-being would be necessary. A family schedule must be present. You can leave projects in the workroom and have family time at home. I deliberately left the laptop in the workroom, so I can't deliver projects. (Puukari 2024.)

Renovation is my counterweight. You have to shift the focus to something else. It's a counterweight to the mind-numbing thing. When you're mentally tired, strain your body; when your body is tired, strain your mind. Creativity always needs empty space, free time, boredom, and relaxation. Society and the environment say that you have to be productive and useful. That pressure is a terrible brake on the creativity of many people. If it feels oppressive, you must know how to stop

and permit yourself not to do anything. That's why producers usually go elsewhere and cut loose. Let's change the landscape and change the thinking. That way, you can relax quickly and permit yourself to relax. Creativity increases when the mind is not tense. Creative solutions require time and idle time. Insights from another perspective. Then those good melodies pop when the brain is doing something else. If you're online all the time, ideas won't pop. A balance is everything. (Tuovinen 2024.)

In summary, the producer must have some activity counterbalance to work-life. The producer must empty their mind from the projects that they are working on. This gives the essential distance between the producer and the project. As a result, the project will get more precise attention, and the producer will have a fresh mindset and ears to work with the project.

#### **4.4.5 The work community**

Some have the opportunity for a work community, and others do not. Collegial relationships are essential. They are places where things can be reviewed, where learning happens, and where experiences are shared. The doctors in Kuopio University Hospital have weekly meetings at work. The senior doctor discusses complex cases with the young doctors, and they discuss how to improve together. Producers could create a group chat or an internet forum for this kind of gathering. They could have 4–5 colleagues have a conversation about the questions that are on their minds. Building an opening thing with people in the same situation is smart. Work integrity is essential and a good thing; it improves things. Nowadays, producers work at studio office communes. They can converse with other producers in the lounge with coffee. That's how to jump out of the session, and then they can dive back in. The work community is the producers' home base. Also, it's good to have other professionals on your team, like finance and money transfer people. Ask for help from others who are professionals with the things that you are not. (Hiilesmaa 2024.)

The most effective tool is the work community. Seeks strength and peer support from other people. Fortunately, there are working groups and teams. Choose good colleagues who appreciate and understand you. If you don't know how to

take care of yourself, the work community can, for example, or can ask for help. My wife also makes music, so there's someone at home who understands how hard the work is in the music industry. Developing myself and strengthening my weaknesses are the things I have tried to do over the years. One way to do that is to find the right people. Assembling a good workgroup is essential. Who is better than you or actually gets the best out of you? I've learned a lot in a company tougher than myself. (Reunamäki 2017.)

The producers are not public figures, and peer support stories are not very often. In Aux Ry meetings, having a peer-to-peer encounter with colleagues was nice. When comparing, you dare to say the things you don't dare to say otherwise. When I could talk to a friend, it helped a lot. A working room complex can be good if there are people you can talk to and open up to. (Jaakonaho 2024.)

Adjusting the project in a group chat is very heavy and slow. It's so much faster when people are present. Work well-being is not having to analyse written feedback. The presence of people in making solutions is better than having to solve things alone. You can react to the situation better when you see people and talk. Otherwise, I strive to ensure that people are online and that communication is flawless and fast. There must be some kind of community; that's essential. Making music is fundamentally a group effort. We are always part of a group. If you make music nowadays, the idea is that you do everything yourself. There are unpressured sessions when there is a team behind you. (Tuovinen 2024.)

We should find healthier and more human-friendly ways to solve problems daily. Whose responsibility is it to make the music industry less stressful? People talk a lot about mental health problems on social media, but it's not necessarily the most effective way to spread the message to the work culture. It should be addressed in the physical places where a working community is built. There should be an infrastructure on the HR side of the music industry. Many people numb themselves and prefer running away from things to facing them or speaking in public. I couldn't handle the exhaustion at first, but luckily, I noticed before it got too far. I had a big workload and a lot of things in my personal life. I learned a lot from the first exhaustion: I can't go to the bar to drink anymore; I must rest.

Finding balance and the tools to manage your work and mental health is essential. Maintaining the beginner's mind and enthusiasm is essential, as it gives you the energy to keep going. Making music is difficult enough professionally, anyway. Find boundaries, find good colleagues to whom you can openly talk, who understand you, and who can give peer support to you. It is essential to have regular peer support. (Reunamäki 2024.)

In summary, a producer must have a work community or create one. If they don't have a physical work community, they could easily create a group chat or forum to discuss complex work cases. Producers must remember to speak about customers and companies anonymously for safety and confidentiality. It would help if the producer opened up and talked confidentially about their problems and challenges with the community. The community is the producer's safe net.

#### **4.4.6 Industry, companies and A&R's**

Companies want new sounds and new success stories all the time. Companies need these to succeed. The pressures are enormous for a multinational Finnish office; results must be made. Companies are interested in producers as long as they bring money to the table. When the producer no longer brings money, companies are no longer interested in the producer as a person. You must learn quickly that the industry is heartless, relentless, and has no manners. Your value as a producer is that you can generate money for those companies. If you can internalise it realistically, you won't take it personally if the phone no longer rings. Don't expect anything from the person who pays your salary. Clients, A&R, or companies are not your friends. If you get work gigs, approach them as an entrepreneur. The sooner you learn to deal with the fact that we are service providers and companies want to buy services that are as profitable as possible for them, the better. Don't take it personally if you can't deliver the most profitable service possible. Some people take it seriously, but you don't have to commit or accept it in this field. Companies are not your closest heart friends. Don't sacrifice yourself for the client because they won't sacrifice themselves for you. There is no empathy in the industry. A group selfie, success parties, and everything else are great, but you might get fired in a second if there are no sales and if someone is better and faster than you. There is a distorted image of being one big family.

There has been a lot of change, even within record companies. There is not one big family with the business side. If you're going to be successful, you should look to the future and see what else you can do in the field. Because you're not always going to be the hottest producer. (Jaakonaho 2024.)

There is a lot of talk about the use of power. There are a lot of positions of power. There are a lot of young producers who want to work by any means and record companies who are looking for new talent. The record companies have the power to hire you or not to hire you and promote you to a high position. People easily make desperate decisions and work too cheaply and too much, to get a job and advance in their careers. No one dares to open a conversation at the executive level because everyone fears the work will run out and they won't be hired anymore. Part of the position of power is that those with less power do not dare to speak. Many people fear speaking up when the job market is tight or no one is hiring. I don't want to sound cynical, but the situation will not change because there are huge companies versus individuals with some skills that can be momentarily useful for the company. It's like David vs Goliath. I don't think a person with a power position would see this arrangement because it is hugely distorted. It would be essential that people who want to enter the industry somehow get information or are enlightened so that they know what awaits them and don't get disappointed by the industry's brutality. We should gain awareness to know how to draw our boundaries. Producers may not have enough information and have no idea what the industry is. No one warns them about what is coming, e.g., long days and a bad economy. At the same time, you have to put yourself in the game, but you have to know how not to take personally the disappointments and bad feelings brought by a position of power. I don't think the position of power would change because the initiative does not come from big record companies. Producers are under the record company's dominance, the big Finnish record companies are under the foreigners, and everything is at the mercy of the bigger one. I didn't notice any seminars or meetings regarding the well-being of record business workers. At the organisational level, this could be done to improve the sector. People could talk about these things, and A&R and record company people could be called so that they would hear, be aware, and understand the whole. You don't recognise how the industry is until someone burns out. Due to the position of power, the producer wants to show that everything is fine because he

wants to be a good and reliable worker—the challenge brought by the power position. Everyone in the organisation and at the colleague level knows this very well, but the employer does not know or care. You have to draw your own boundaries and trust. Industry cliché: if I say no, then I won't be asked anything. I've said no many times, but I've always found work during the 28 years. (Jaakonaho 2024.)

It is a strange co-dependency relationship: You get tired of the business, which creates problems, but you always come back with enthusiasm. You treat the industry well, but the industry does not treat you well. People burn out on their own and never talk about it. (Jaakonaho 2024.)

Companies are recognising mental health problems, and it's better than before, but there are no tools for them. There is no HR department at the workplace or in the cultural sector. It depends a lot on luck whether there are good coworkers and colleagues. Regardless of people's personal relationships, the work pattern includes a dynamic between creators and big companies. Superior characters decide which songs go through and who succeeds. Some gatekeepers have so much power. You don't want your brand to be depressed and anxious. Everyone wants everyone to have fun in the songwriting session. Big guys with more status would be needed to talk about mental health. For example, if Asko Kallonen talked about his mental health, there would be a bigger impact and more inspiration. We should talk more and concentrate on mental health; jobs should be open-minded about it. Social media is a discussion forum, but it does not develop tools for the industry. While people are trying to seek help, no one encourages them to do it. Not everyone has the opportunity or desire to go to therapy. At the grass-roots level, the work community should have an open forum. There's still a bit of an idea in the industry that you can't be weak because if you're weak, people think you're incapable of work, which means you won't get a good result, which means no one should order work from you. The fear of weakness shows itself in the eyes of others in a way that suggests you can't be trusted. No one can't work with you when you are so depressed. It causes challenges. You have to go to work with others and be in a really good mood, even if you're not. It does not mean it's difficult or you can't work. And if you can't do it, you should trust that others can help you overcome it and return to work. The work community should

be open, and no one should be judged. Delusion: If his workability is insufficient, he thinks others think he is no longer talented. Many do not have a work community or are in the middle of fierce competition for the main ones. Everyone is fighting for the same projects, there is jealousy, etc. Many may have challenging working conditions daily. Even if there is a community, there is still the fear of losing jobs to others if you can't work. The most sensitive, emotionally intelligent people succeed in this field, but simultaneously, it is the most challenging and hardest for them. It takes many layers of skin and an insane tolerance for shit. It's a terrible paradox how sensitive people manage in such a brutal competition in the intellectual field. (Reunamäki 2024.)

When you are young, the amount of experience has not grown enough. It should be on the same level as record company employees. The problems are generally left on one's shoulders and not on the record companies. It's sad that people who are sensitive and then they work in a tough field. You can't just be the Excel guy; you cannot produce music if you are not emotional. (Tuovinen 2024.)

Attention is paid to mental health constantly, and it has also been discussed in the media. Who my contact person is has a significant meaning. Some people recognise and understand it, and some don't. The producer is a workhorse and is responsible for getting the product done. When there is a deadline, the record company is not interested in how the producer feels. If the extradition happens again, it will show up as unreliability, and they will ask someone else to do the work next time. Creating a new song is difficult if you have to be ready quickly. Strict frames and deadlines get things done. It's a love-hate relationship because stress makes me do my work, but it does not feel good at that moment. Writer's block annoys me, and I would like to give up, but I must try to have fun and forget the pressure. At the camps, you get to know each other through social networking. If the song is good and goes forward, that's just a plus. Making music is the main point. Thinking about the situation too much can ruin the session, but with experience, you can deal with it. Even if there are problems, people trust you because you already have a long career and have done successful projects. The first time, there can be a lot of pressure to succeed. You stress about success, and you force the song on. With experience, it will be eliminated. Being in the camp is exciting when there is a different pressure than working alone. It also

makes you relaxed when you go to a familiar environment. You have to see beyond the session and projects. It's one session and project, among the others. I find comfort when others are in the same boat because you share doing it with others. (Puukari 2024.)

It is challenging to combine capitalism and people's well-being. Good and understanding people should soften the spike of capitalism. People from record companies, AR, or publishers would be humane towards producers. The system's basic structure: Money and capitalism drive everything, and it does not care about people. (Puukari 2024.)

Considerably, more emphasis should be placed on well-being in education and how to act in working life. It is easy to get cheated if there are young creators who are ready to do anything to gain fame and success. It's easier to do your own thing as a self-publisher than to be whipped, told, and forced to make music by the record company's A&R. It's like someone else picks the raisins out of the bun if they float to the surface. Businesspeople know that young people want to get involved in the scene by any means. Young producers are easily being exploited questionably. (Hiilesmaa 2024.)

The remedy for this situation is to go with the two-pronged technique:

1. Do your own thing to the fullest with people you want to work with and when and how you want to do it. This is how you stay sane when creating your own identity.
2. Do whatever is ordered and requested. At the same time, you have a musical identity, which you do well with friends.

In summary, the employer or the management is not the producer's closest friend or therapist. The producer is like gum; after the flavour fades, the companies spit you out. The producer should never trust or assume anything from the companies. Companies are just interested in making a profit, not thinking about how an individual worker feels. The producers should be prepared and ask for help from the most experienced producers on how to operate with the companies. Also,

Lottaliina Pokkinen has written several books about musicians' and underdog rights that producers can learn from and benefit from.

#### **4.4.7 Know your and your client's limits**

Remember to anticipate enough and schedule the project. Leave the easiest things or things that don't matter much for the last studio days so there is no pressure to get things done. Projects have to have reasonable and realistic schedules. The band leader calls you to make complete album recordings in one day. You know already that this is not a realistic time for the project. The whole band must be committed; if not, you can see it immediately. You can demand that it be agreed upon together to stick to the schedule. You might be surprised if you agree to do a project based on one person's opinions and information, so never assume anything. Contracts and schedules must always be written and saved with a realistic schedule. The band, A&R, and the record company have different views. You can't make three albums with the budget of one album. Communication is everything. If the record company pays you a salary, the artist does not know how much you get. The artist asks for money from the record company and not the producer. The artist has to know which responsibility belongs to everyone. (Hiilesmaa 2024.)

A person is responsible for finding the means to survive in the field. You must set those limits yourself and hope they are at the right balance so employers don't reject you. They will replace you if you don't keep up. The industry's initial grind is glorified, and success does not come for free. It's better not to corner people but to give them more space and be more understanding. (Puukari 2024.)

You have to set reasonable limits, even if it is difficult to maintain them initially with enthusiasm. Usually, the only contracts are production royalties. How to define the "Definition of Done". The songs and productions are never ready; they are versions. A deadline usually defines whether a project is ready. The fact that the project is published is more essential than its perfection. Projects can never be finished; they are just published. (Tuovinen 2024.)

Stress comes from the deadline—the Final crunch. Computer people call it "Crush". The last weeks are spent sleeping in the studio, etc., and it's inhumane. You can't finalise the mix a month before. When we do one thing, then we start checking everything else. Once the mix is approved, a new round will start. Someone outside the project must set the deadline; otherwise, versions can be made endlessly. The more we listen and browse the project, the more ideas will come, etc. I've never heard of a project that was ready a month before the mastering. There is always someone who adjusts at the end. Friends' projects are difficult when they never end. Someone has to decide when it's ready. Usually, unnecessary things in the project are rubbed and hiccupped. The ability to withstand pressure is needed when starting to complete a project, and I haven't found a way to prepare in advance. Projects usually pack up towards the end. You have to move on and finish the project. After that, we praised you for being a good guy when you finished the project with us. With a sense of unity, we fought through this and survived the crisis. Versus that, you start arguing. Then it happens that the client thinks that he didn't want to do the best for me. Pushing to the deadline is essential. "Definition of Done": nobody says this is perfect. This is the best possible version at the moment. The pressure resistance at the end of the project must be accepted and prepared for. It's easier to get there when you prepare and get things ready. Towards the end, you have to prepare mentally. (Tuovinen 2024.)

I've cried many times in the studio, but why would I hide my feelings? There are difficult moments when you lead a session and start to cry, but why be ashamed of it? You have to accept that things will not work today, so it's better to try another time. Sensitivity should be interpreted as strength. It's very sad if physics limits what you can do. It is essential to learn to recognise the situation and understand it. Self-knowledge, one's own physiology, and mind control must be developed. Vocational studies should also have a psychological aspect. The essential thing is that you can recognise your spiritual aspects and not fight against them but start accepting them. You tell people and the environment how you feel or are doing. And if it is not accepted by others, it's not your problem. It's other people's problem. You have to understand that. The preparations are incomplete when you start your career. Could the problems at the beginning be avoided, and is it humane if you feel anxiety? If it is to be avoided, then why is it dangerous? It's

not a mental state to aim for. Feeling uncomfortable is also humanity. You have to learn to tolerate uncertainty. Is an anxiety-free state a desirable state? Or is it more essential to know how to manage anxiety than to avoid or not want it? You have to give yourself understanding. You have to be ready for that uncertainty, and you must think about how your mental health can deal with that uncertainty. (Tuovinen 2024.)

In summary, the producer must set healthy boundaries and limits and inform the client of these terms. If the matter needs to be reviewed later, the contract must always be approved in writing before the project starts. The producer is the team leader and sets the limits, not the client. There must be a deadline for the "Definition of Done"; otherwise, the project will never end.

#### **4.4.8 Identity: Success versus lifestyle**

Stream readings stressed many producers. It's easy to start comparing yourself to others. Those who stare at the numbers look at the result—how well you succeeded, like how much running time you spent in a marathon. Real artists look at the flow state and the process as a whole. What comes out of it is not so attractive. Flow mode and being in the middle of what you're doing is what it's all about. For example, all composers compose until they die. Kaija Saariaho is a good example; she wanted to make music, and how well it sells is secondary. Long-term artists are interested in something other than stream numbers or sales. Music and the state of doing are the most essential things. The audience sees nothing but the final result. Real artists make art until they die, and it does not stop when success fades. Pop artists start to end their careers when their stream results and sales go down. There is a difference between pop artists and artists. Those who don't run after success are more comfortable with themselves. (Hii-lesmaa 2024.)

I tried to make good music. I didn't make a massive loss to the record companies. There was no pressure to make a hit song. The stream numbers weren't stared at even though there were gold and platinum records. Spotify has brought stream numbers; producers can stare at numbers in real-time. I didn't feel like I was com-

peting with others. My eyes were looking at different things than success. Succeed and fame were never my thing. I wasn't doing the grinding hit song over and over again. My goodness is not measured by it. In major companies, a producer is measured based on sales. Fortunately, I didn't have to play with the mainstream. Each producer has their own areas of strength. (Jaakonaho 2024.)

Everything is sucked from the producer in the golden age, and after that, the producer's vision is not interesting enough anymore. In popular music, no such producer has successfully produced current pop music for several decades. Similar producers who produce in their own style from decade to decade don't make a living from it. In America, Rick Rubin can support himself decade after decade, doing the same thing for many years. This does not work in Finland, where there are many different trends, not to mention in the 2020s. With old skills, I wouldn't be able to compete with new producers, and I don't even want to. Producing is a fashion profession, and fashions change constantly. It's impossible to keep following the trends. There is no such person who is always fresh. The wave comes, and you're already late when you try replicating it. It's right that there will be new producers that define that sound. There must be other things than fame and success to measure one's worth of a person. (Jaakonaho 2024.)

In the field of music, it is difficult to separate the work self from the individual self because the latter is so comprehensive. Making music is not a choice; it's a requirement for a person to feel complete and belong to the culture. Work-related things can easily feel separate if you think about them independently. You should somehow be able to distinguish between the working self and your basic self. (Tuovinen 2024.)

If the money is the only motivation, your career will be short. It's a momentary career. The motivation for doing things must be something else. Sensitivity and understanding are essential; applying it to such an environment is essential. The Record company is a business whose mission is to make a profit and not be a therapist. You have to find an environment where you can be sensitive. (Tuovinen 2024.)

As a young creator, relaxing can be difficult if you are competitive and the industry is inciting competition for success, visibility, and streaming numbers. A crisis will be a 100 % sure chance if success is essential because no one is king or queen forever. Measuring your own value must be done with something other than stream numbers. If you can support yourself with music, that's already a success story in itself. Commercial successes are generally fleeting things. It would be necessary for the world of values to be something other than success. (Jaakonaho 2024.)

I was burned out in the early days but learned the hard way not to be burned out. The tricky part of the art profession is maintaining identity, which is a chore. Burnouts and feelings of anxiety are so common when we measure ourselves about work. If I did something else that wasn't my identity, maybe it wouldn't mean much to me. I don't think much about my job, but I have a life that includes what I do, and they are tied together. This is lifestyle work. There is lots of love but lots of worries. (Jaakonaho 2024.)

Money is not the reason I do this. Work does lead to money if you do it and move forward. I don't serve that grinding hell, but that is what the industry wants me to do. (Puukari 2024.)

In summary, money, fame, and success are not good reasons to pursue the arts. If the career is made for these reasons, it will probably be short and rocky. Producers must internalise that their success and fame do not define them. Focus on creating the music and remember your initial enthusiasm when you started making music.

#### **4.4.9 Perfectionism**

Perfectionists strive for perfection and demand a lot from themselves. For example, they finish the task and only rest, even if their strength has dwindled much earlier. Perfectionists also often take longer than usual to complete tasks and things. They easily get stuck in the design phase or filing down the details, which can lead to inefficiency and delays. In addition, avoiding or postponing things, often due to fear of failure, characterises the lives of perfectionists. I doubt

trying new things. Spontaneous flow is left to less, making it difficult to seize the moment. Perfectionists want to avoid risks and anticipate situations well so that they know how to act in them. This way of thinking often leads to overanalysing, self-criticism and wasted potential. The pursuit of perfection can easily lead to constant stress and exhaustion. How, then, could a Perfectionist lower the bar? Realising that life is not performance and value is not measured by performance. (Jan-Henry Stenberg 2023.)

Perfectionists are characterised by dedication to work and productivity at the expense of free time. In adults, the pursuit of perfection is often seen in everyday life as a performance which can extend to all areas of life. A person may beat himself up to do it constantly, in which case the idleness and relaxation, which are essential for recovery, become impossible. It is not rare that when at my reception, for example, the background factors of a heavy workload, recovery difficulties or exhaustion are discussed, unreasonable demands on oneself emerge as one factor. However, the paradox is this: perfection can never be achieved because the perfectionist's demands are constantly rising. (Anu Tevanlinna 2022.)

On the other hand, in most professions, perfectionism does not seem to have a significant benefit. In fact, studies have shown that perfectionists perform worse on average than others in the long run. Work productivity decreases when attention turns to the end result instead of doing. This results in pressure, and things are easily delayed and don't go well when starting things. Creativity suffers because a perfectionist likes to play it safe and does not like to take risks when trying to avoid mistakes. Perfectionists also easily start fixing things that aren't broken. They often spend more time and energy doing things than is necessary. (Petri Hiissa 2022.)

Perfectionism can manifest as procrastination and postponement because a perfectionist cannot even start work until he knows that he will succeed. Hakala reminds us that, at worst, pursuing perfection leads to exhaustion, which can long-term affect one's ability to work. (Juha T. Hakala 2022.)

In summary, projects are never perfect; they are just versions. It is better to move on and look at the bigger picture than spend time trying to create the perfect product. When tweaking the project, the producers should ask themselves: What is my work-time and effect ratio?

#### **4.4.10 Culture and work hangover**

There is no hunger for culture; if you go to a gig, watch TV, or listen to the radio, your brain goes into work mode. I am trying to avoid extra noise when I am not working. (Hiilesmaa 2024.)

It is hard at work not to take all the job offers you can get. I had a really intense period in the 2000s. After that, I got a really strong feeling that I didn't want to listen to music or that I didn't like any sound. I was able to support myself with the job. However, it came to a complete stop after the work was done. The mental stop was why I lost the comfort and pleasure of doing this. I worked too much and didn't take care of myself enough. The place of spiritual growth was to find motivation again, start my own family, and get tired of music. I don't know if it could have been avoided. (Tuovinen 2024.)

In summary, the producer must remember to give some silence to their ears and minds. Producers are used to analysing sounds, so every external audio source can tune the producer into work mode. Too much work can also become insurmountable, and the producer starts to repel the projects.

#### **4.4.11 Movement for better mental health**

Exercise helps a lot because you sit at the computer, and it's good for the body to move. Exercise also helps the mind. A human needs physical movement. I always try to walk the trips to the studio from home. A walk can calm down the hype you get in the studio session. (Puukari 2024.)

Exercise helps when it is present and done regularly. After five days in the studio, you must also remember to rest. (Tuovinen 2024.)

Daily sitting passives the muscles and strains the spine. At the gym, you can take care of your body just for the needs of sitting. Problems caused by sedentary work can be prevented even before they arise. Strengthening and maintaining muscles prevents pain conditions before they become serious and require medical help. Exercise increases alertness and improves endurance at work. Good movements for sedentary workers include movements aimed at the back, shoulders, and middle body. (Alakärppä 2016.)

An ergonomic office chair prevents pain and illness and improves work efficiency. The office chair's ergonomics are directly connected to occupational health and well-being. The chair has the most immediate effect on back, shoulder and neck pain. It also improves blood circulation and takes care of the spine. (Tavaratradning.com n.d.) Also, maintaining proper posture prevents strain on the back and reduces muscle tension in the neck and shoulders, leading to pain, headaches, and fatigue. (Modeo.fi n.d.)

In summary, good ergonomics and regular exercise reduce the risk of getting sick. Keeping your body in good shape is essential because it will positively affect your mental health.

## 5 THE THOUGHTS OF DOCTORS

To achieve a convincing result, I interviewed a specialist doctor about improving and maintaining health. I also added essential information about healthcare and Aki Hintra's methods of improving human performance.

### 5.1 How is mental health taken care of?

We have to create working hours forcefully. Focus on work for 8 hours and then do something else. You have to remember to take breaks along with work. Even a 5-minute walk and fresh air can help with problem-solving. Longer days are getting easier if you take 20–30 minute breaks. At its maximum, two hours of intense work is required; after that, we are rarely at our best. Of course, a lot also depends on the person; the differences exist. Fresh ears are quite different from tired ones. Psychophysical concentration is not possible when going into overtime. I believe that big professional producers stick to their working hours. (Niemelä 2024.)

Sleep is the key to everything. Many people have been sleep-deprived their whole lives and wonder why they feel bad and why their brains don't work. Working when tired is not as efficient. Handling things is difficult and slow; attention and concentration deteriorate, and nothing goes well. Better rested, working hours are 100 % more efficient. If you work tired and are not attentive, the work may have to be done again the next day. If performance and workability decrease, your work will also be affected. Healthy maintenance of functional ability, i.e., workability, starts with the basic things: sleep, exercise, and nutrition. (Niemelä 2024.)

Since lack of sleep causes unfavourable changes in the body's physiological stress responses, immune system, glucose metabolism, blood pressure, nutrition and maintenance of healthy lifestyles, it is understandable that lack of sleep can be a risk factor. (Appeals et al. 1987, Vgontzas et al. 2005.) In addition to physical health, sleep has a central effect on all three areas of mental functioning: activity, thinking and emotions. Through energy metabolism, sleep affects, for example,

maintaining attentiveness and directing and evaluating one's own actions in new and complex situations. In practice, the deterioration of cognitive function worsens school success. It leads to incorrect actions, which decreases productivity and accidents at work and in free time. For example, insomnia symptoms roughly double the risk of a fatal work accident. (Åkerstedt et al. 2002.) Sleep also affects memory by strengthening memory traces created while awake and modifying memory traces to facilitate understanding. (Stickgold 2005.) Insufficient sleep has been found to affect mood at least as adversely as cognitive functions. (Pilcher & Huffcutt 1996.) The effect of insufficient sleep on emotions usually manifests itself as increased irritability and depression, but sometimes also euphoria. (Mikko Härmä & Mikael Sallinen 2006.)

It's easy to get delusional. Thinking that suffering is part of the artist's image. A healthy lifestyle is boring and weird, and artistry suffers because of it. You have to reset yourself with alcohol, even if there are better alternatives. The use of substances affects the quality of sleep, and when tired, it is easy to make bad choices regarding nutrition. The right reset is not using intoxicants, and those who have understood the healthy ways to reset can work longer and better. Of course, there are differences, and there may be coincidences. (Niemelä 2024.)

Mind and body are adapting to problems. The central nervous system includes the brain and spinal cord. It collects information from the peripheral nervous system, i.e., the senses and the body. Based on this information, the central nervous system controls and adapts the body's reactions as needed. (Mielenterveystalo.fi 2024.)

Self-care means taking time to improve your physical and mental health. Get regular exercise, eat healthily, stay hydrated, and prioritise sleep. Schedule relaxation and other healthy activities you enjoy. Learn to say "no" to new tasks and appreciate your accomplishments. Identify negative thoughts and reach out to friends and family for emotional support. (National Institute of Mental Health n.d.)

The rules of the game must be presented in advance. It explains why professional producers work fewer but better hours. You can do better work when you focus on one thing for 8 hours. You shouldn't try too hard to please the client. The career

is a marathon, not a sprint. When you take care of your ability to work, you get full attention and professionalism. If the project's delay is caused by something other than the producer, remember to be honest about the delay. For example, the band is not in shape, etc. Many people put in too long working days, and their heads can't take it, so they go to other jobs. Limits must be set. Nobody is super-human. Occasionally, you can get by with poor performance, but not in the long run. (Niemelä 2024.)

## **5.2 How to prevent mental health problems?**

It is reactive that we usually go to the doctor only when there is a problem. Basically, you should try to prevent problems. For example, Terveystalo can make an annual entrepreneur contract, and you will get a comprehensive occupational health doctor. This way, you have your own occupational health doctor who is always familiar. The certainty that there are acquaintances in the background calms the mind; it brings reassurance. You can get tests and discuss your problems with a doctor if necessary. (Niemelä 2024.)

## **5.3 How to react to health symptoms?**

You have to think about what causes stress and anxiety and where it appears. What is the reaction related to? E.g., the amount of work or work content. Is there anything I can do myself? Can I make a repair movement? If you can't find a way, contact your doctor. Peer support also helps; others can help determine if you should see a doctor for any symptoms. The pace is fast, and we do many things simultaneously: studies, work, relationships, hobbies, and financial pressures. Cognitive doing and performance are required all the time in working life. We try to get things done too much and too quickly. We go sprinting all the time and burn ourselves out. There should be a marathon and a long run to make up for that journey. Stress is the best killer of creativity, and slowness is good for creative work. The joy of play and discovery should never go out of that thing. The basics and work management must be in order. (Niemelä 2024.)

#### **5.4 How is burnout treated?**

Going to the doctor's office as soon as you recognise symptoms. Analyse problems and what has led to burnout with a psychologist. Find a way how to change things that have led to burnout. It is also essential to rule out all other mental health problems. Usually, there are 2–6 months of sick leave, and Kela supports sickness with allowances. Returning to work little by little for a soft landing. Pension insurance—a work trial helps you try to work again. Analysis and work management are the basis for making boundaries. There is no magic wand or magic pill for health. (Niemelä 2024.)

#### **5.5 Finnish association of music medicine**

The Finnish Association of Music Medicine, SMULY ry, is dedicated to advancing the prevention and treatment of illnesses, injuries, and psychosocial stress among musicians. The association also shares research-based information about the general health effects of music. The Psychosocial Section provides advice and support to musicians experiencing psychosocial issues due to work-related stress factors. The service is offered free of charge to musicians. The section comprises a team of experts and researchers with interdisciplinary education, knowledge, and experience in the challenges and needs of musicians and music communities. Please note that the PS is not a healthcare provider, and consultation is not a replacement healthcare. (Smuly.fi n.d.)

#### **5.6 Aki Hintsa, the Formula 1 doctor**

Aki Hintsa (PICTURE 7) was a famous Finnish sports doctor and orthopaedic surgeon specialising in traumatology. He was renowned for his 11-year career as a Formula 1 pit doctor. He served as a doctor for the Finnish Olympic Committee and worked as a mission doctor in Ethiopia in the late 1990s. (Hintsa 2015.)

Hintsa was interested in the training routines of elite Ethiopian long-distance runners. Their dominance in this sport and balanced approach to life appeared to give them a competitive edge. All the elements in Ethiopian long-distance runners' lives and environments were geared towards supporting their goals. He

wondered whether the optimal performance was derived from a healthy and balanced life. He speculated that knowing one's identity and core motivations might be the key to achieving balance. He created the Circle of Better Life model, which consisted of a circle with six outer layers representing physical activity, nutrition, sleep and recovery, biomechanics, mental energy, and general health. In the middle of the circle, he wrote the word "Core", representing one's identity, goals, and levels of control. This model defined the entire Hintsä methodology. (Hintsä 2015.)

From 2010 to 2022, Hintsä's methods supported F1 drivers who won 17 consecutive World Drivers' Championships. Hintsä's team began applying the methods proven in Formula 1 to executives and business professionals in high-pressure environments. Rather than aiming for world championships, these clients aimed for sustainable high performance. (Hintsä 2015.)

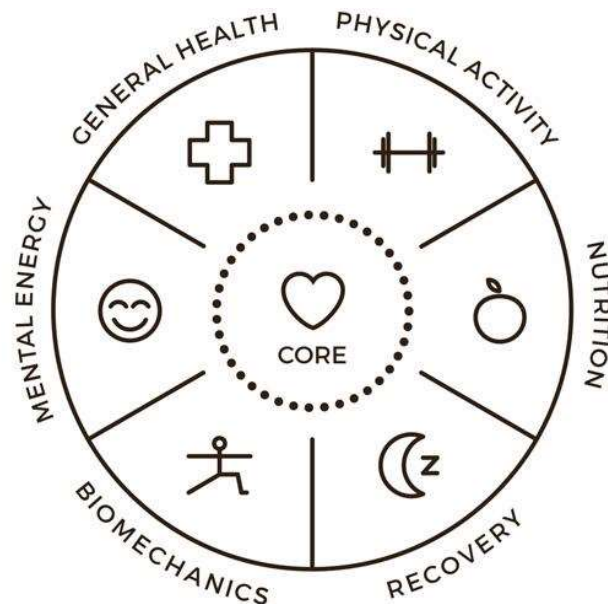


PICTURE 7. Kimi Räikkönen, F1 driver (left) ja Aki Hintsä, Doctor (right) (Heikki Saukkomaa 2005)

### **5.6.1 The Core – A better life, better performance**

Hintsä's approach revolves around the notion of having a clear understanding of oneself. Imagine a wheel made up of seven parts. If one part fails, the wheel stops spinning. To ensure a smooth spin, all parts must be present and balanced.

Everything starts from the Core (PICTURE 8) — your inner motivation to achieve sustainable change. Exploring your Core helps you live a life that truly represents you, allowing you to realise more of your potential and stay true to what matters most. Your Core is a motivational backbone for making meaningful changes toward your goals. (Hintsä 2015.)



PICTURE 8. Aki Hintsä's method, the Core (Mehiläinen 2019)

### 5.6.2 Do you know who you are?

Identity is not merely the name or profession of a person. It should be based on values close to one's heart rather than external factors like social status or job. Remove all the external factors from yourself and ask yourself, what is your true identity based on? (Hintsä 2015.)

### 5.6.3 Do you know what you want?

This statement's truth is reflected in how people spend their time and where they choose to spend it. If you have a clear goal in mind, your decisions should not be influenced by others' opinions. Are you surviving daily or making meaningful progress toward your goals? (Hintsä 2015.)

#### **5.6.4 Are you in control of your own life?**

The ultimate aim of the Core is to strongly adhere to the first two questions in a precise and determined manner. When your daily activities and routines align with your values and objectives, you can confidently assert that you control your life. However, answering these questions just once is not enough. You must ask yourself regularly since you can quickly get accustomed to your habits, and it can be challenging to break away from them or even to recognise bad habits. (Hintsa 2015.)

#### **5.6.5 General health**

Start your journey towards better health by thoroughly investigating your current state of health and treating any acute ailments. Individuals of different nationalities and families have varying risks of developing chronic diseases. Identify your personal risk factors as your lifestyle determines which disease-promoting genes activate. Invest in prevention to reduce chronic disease risk by 50 % through lifestyle choices. (Hintsa 2015.)

#### **5.6.6 Nutrition**

It's essential to find your eating rhythm. Listen to your body to determine what works best for you. Eat whole foods and read labels to avoid processed products or food from unknown sources. The body needs enough protein, fat, and good-quality carbohydrates to maintain a healthy diet. Therefore, reducing the intake of added sugar and fast carbohydrates from your diet is recommended. It is widely known that consuming various vegetables is highly beneficial for our health. Consuming 7–10 servings of vegetables daily is recommended, out of which two or three can be fruit. Filling half your plate with vegetables at every meal is a good practice. To reap more benefits, consuming vegetables of different colours is recommended. It is recommended that adults drink a minimum of two litres of water per day, not including any fluids consumed during physical activity. If you eat and drink sensibly 80 per cent of the time, you can indulge during the remaining 20 per cent. You can enjoy anything, but always practice patience and moderation in your choices. (Hintsa 2015.)

### **5.6.7 Mental energy**

Social environment. Invest time in close human relationships, as they are the basis of everything. Discover who is the most significant person to you and why. (Hintsa 2015.)

Work environment. It's essential to have a positive work environment that you enjoy, and that gives you energy. (Hintsa 2015.)

Personal environment. When people take care of themselves by getting enough sleep, pursuing hobbies, and spending time with loved ones, they come to work more energetic, accomplished, and healthier. (Hintsa 2015.)

### **5.6.8 Biomechanics**

Test your biomechanical functionality. Take care of your muscle condition, especially the condition of the supporting muscles of the middle body, and remember to stretch. Don't forget to do gymnastic exercises during work breaks. (Hintsa 2015.)

### **5.6.9 Recovery & sleep**

Most people require between 7.5 and 8.5 hours of sleep per night, so make sure you're allowing enough time for it. In the evening, it's best to avoid light as it can stimulate the brain and body and signal that you should be awake and alert. Additionally, using electronic devices such as computers, mobile phones, or tablets before bedtime is not recommended. Limiting your caffeine and alcohol intake and going to bed simultaneously every night can also improve your sleep quality. (Hintsa 2015.)

In summary, good health begins with basic habits. If you neglect these habits, your health will decline. It is everyone's responsibility to take care of themselves. Everyone should prioritise their own health and create realistic boundaries and working schedules to prevent health issues.

## 6 CONCLUSION

This thesis aimed to find solutions for how music producers could improve their mental health and mental durability and anticipate a feeling of burning out before it is too late. Working as a music producer in the music industry is challenging because of uncertainty and finance. Working with clients, A&R, and record companies, communicating with them, and implementing their thoughts about the projects takes time and mental strength. Music producers are the most sensitive ones; creating music that touches people is impossible without emotional feelings. The music industry is changing rapidly, and keeping up and staying in is challenging. Music publishers, recording companies, and the music industry await speed, effectiveness, and success.

Research studies show how the music industry is pushing music producers to work overtime with poor contracts. Companies do not consider the mental side of music producers; they are interested only in the results and profits they could make. Employees in high positions who lead their subordinates are used to getting what they want. The music producer must be responsible for creating and complying with their limits. It takes time and effort to achieve a better work-life balance and performance. Most of the music producers interviewed had faced this kind of challenge in their careers.

It is possible for a music producer to improve mental health. The interviewed professionals have proven methods to handle the pressure from uncertainty, finance, time management, clients, A&R, and record companies. The music producer must have a strong sense of self-worth and healthy boundaries regarding working time, salary, and projects.

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## APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Interview with Jurek Reunamäki

Interviewer: Niklas Piispala

Date: 01.02.2024

YouTube link:

<https://youtu.be/I51-VqhPDtk>

Google Drive link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TY7HE-ZIxWSZ5ccuWAKeQv1VHbRVb8gHV/view?usp=sharing>

Dropbox link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/rwsf7suz4qn6mozflz0fa/How-to-Handle-Stress-and-Anxiety-in-Music-Production.-Interview-with-Jurek-Reunam-ki-01.02.2024.mp3?rlkey=ej7p0u2xgpauzc4a15u8p1lku&dl=0>

## Appendix 2. Interview with Hiili Hiilesmaa

Interviewer: Niklas Piispala

Date: 12.03.2024

YouTube link:

<https://youtu.be/KIE7ohM1odU>

Google Drive link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UG77-oHtgIxRVyKVIt-BGe5BQWMg9beWG/view?usp=sharing>

Dropbox link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/sb3g8xr7iml2w8qzzkaf/How-to-Handle-Stress-and-Anxiety-in-Music-Production.-Interview-with-Hiili-Hiilesmaa-12.03.2024.mp3?rlkey=17jo0h60pdt2qt96g8drh9s8&dl=0>

### Appendix 3. Interview with Tuomo Niemelä

Interviewer: Niklas Piispala

Date: 02.05.2024

YouTube link:

<https://youtu.be/5hqELJpTdLM>

Google Drive link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/14x3CxafPHCEW3laPbM4yZhn2rPep-nq4/view?usp=sharing>

Dropbox link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/08p76a66uld11ld7mjga3/How-to-Handle-Stress-and-Anxiety-in-Music-Production.-Interview-with-Tuomo-Niemel-02.05.2024.mp3?rlkey=4g14fcbdfx7dst7ku9bj45nw&dl=0>

#### Appendix 4. Interview with Jussi Jaakonaho

Interviewer: Niklas Piispala

Date: 26.02.2024

YouTube link:

<https://youtu.be/uOIRXPvnoEg>

Google Drive link:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TVa48zI7ZX5etTCB-ieJ1oPHU7ZMhp5\\_/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TVa48zI7ZX5etTCB-ieJ1oPHU7ZMhp5_/view?usp=sharing)

Dropbox link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/51mn0w5j9tz9nfi5z5rvw/How-to-Handle-Stress-and-Anxiety-in-Music-Production.-Interview-with-Jussi-Jaakonaho-26.02.2024.mp3?rlkey=c0ffy9uv9vjs4g5f46l01t6ky&dl=0>

## Appendix 5. Interview with Jyrki Tuovinen

Interviewer: Niklas Piispala

Date: 08.03.2024

YouTube link:

<https://youtu.be/t4vUZ2f-Wv0>

Google Drive link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Nvni0IJ0EYEytVFjbAQN-WeEnTZMyr02v/view?usp=sharing>

Dropbox link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/uia0wmx43mji41pvml375/How-to-Handle-Stress-and-Anxiety-in-Music-Production.-Interview-with-Jyrki-Tuovinen-08.03.2024.mp3?rlkey=qg5nnkg8oa9r0z3v9ra1z84is&dl=0>

## Appendix 6. Interview with Simeon Puukari

Interviewer: Niklas Piispala

Date: 20.03.2024

YouTube link:

<https://youtu.be/LkC6YI0kOtQ>

Google Drive link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vLf37r0dQeQNctipEGec5bBPDi2Ys-jKg/view?usp=sharing>

Dropbox link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/5enngua88ycv8j3c4zt8y/How-to-Handle-Stress-and-Anxiety-in-Music-Production.-Interview-with-Simeon-Puukari-20.03.2024.mp3?rlkey=2i5914p4iwpyyf5j6kmbu5oqr&dl=0>