



PAINLESS

— THE OPIOID MUSICAL —



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TEACHING RESOURCES

Supplemental Activities for the Michigan Model for Health using *Painless: The Opioid Musical*

In an effort to combat the opioid crisis in our state *Painless: the Opioid Musical* was developed and integrated with the Michigan Model for Health™, an evidence-based health curriculum, to address the urgent need of opioid misuse prevention. This toolkit supports the integration of *Painless* with MMH, as an enhancement to the opioid misuse prevention content, and was informed by the Comprehensive School Safety Implementation Guide, the Implementation Facilitation Guide from the Veterans Health Administration, and Adaptive School-based Implementation (1–4)

Many thanks goes out to the partners collaborating on this work to ensure that the fight against opioid misuse continues. These partners include:

- The University of Michigan's Precision Health
- The University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre, and Dance
- The University of Michigan School of Public Health
- Michigan OPEN
- The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services
- The Michigan Department of Education

Inspired by true stories of opioid use disorder and recovery, *Painless: The Opioid Musical* aims to educate Michigan's youth about the prevalence and dangers of the opioid epidemic.

Schools selected as a part of the M-HOPE Enhancement are provided this toolkit to as a supplement to *Painless: The Opioid Musical*. Included in this toolkit is information about school-based program implementation, tailoring and adaptation, barriers to implementation, and tools and resources for integrating MMH and *Painless*. The appendices include resources which teachers and staff may find useful in preparing and implementing this Supplemental Outreach and Education (SOE) strategy. The goal of this SOE toolkit is to provide teachers with resources to supplement their teaching of the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs (ATOD) unit of the Michigan Model for Health.



DISCUSSION POINTS

***Painless: The Opioid Musical* Discussion Points for Teachers and MMH**

Below is a list of discussion points and questions to help organize discussion in a manner that will help students delve deeper into the topics appearing in the musical and work together to develop strategies to avoid prescription drug misuse and abuse. We recommend a minimum of one discussion point to begin conversation sparked by *Painless: The Opioid Musical*. Each discussion point begins with some information about opioids and/or a summary of a portion of *Painless*. Use these introductions to lead into the suggested questions. For each discussion point, we have provided one suggested lesson where the discussion point dovetails into the lesson for teachers using the MMH curriculum. Please note that these are only suggestions and teachers can use the discussion points in any lesson, or in a standalone discussion.

DISCUSSION POINT 1: EVERYONE IS AT RISK

This discussion point coincides with Lesson 1 in the MMH Unit 5: Alcohol, Tobacco, & Other Drugs.

Select one or more of these statistics to begin the discussion

The musical ended with several statistics, including:

- Drug overdose is the number one cause of accidental death in the United States of America, with 70,237 lethal drug overdoses in 2017, alone.
- In 2018, two million people misused prescription opioids for the first time.
- Nearly half of young people who inject heroin start by misusing prescription pain medicines, which are opioids.
- Most adolescents who misuse prescription pain relievers are given them for free by a friend or relative.
- The numbers are alarming and show that everyone is at risk—this applies to each of you in this room.

Solicit students' feedback on the statistics and encourage further conversation with questions such as:

- If a doctor prescribes a medication, can it be harmful?
- How would prescription misuse be defined?
- Were any of you aware that addiction can begin with just one pill, or of the connection between opioid use and heroin use?



DISCUSSION POINTS

DISCUSSION POINT 2: EFFECTS OF OPIOID USE

This discussion point coincides with Lesson 1 in the MMH Unit 5: Alcohol, Tobacco, & Other Drugs.

Opioid misuse affects each person differently. The musical portrayed several lives which were affected by opioid use disorder; *Boy in the Box* and *Hey Mr. Doc* are two examples. *Boy in the Box* describes the person stealing from his mom to pay for his addiction and *Hey Mr. Doc* depicts a young woman going from doctor to doctor to feed her addiction.

The following questions can be used to discuss the effects of opioid use:

- How did the musical portray the lives of the people suffering from opioid abuse disorder?
- How do you think an opioid addiction would interfere with your daily life?
- Are there any consequences individuals in the musical faced that you might be able to relate to (i.e. “so I missed the game, who cares, so what?”)?

DISCUSSION POINT 3: EFFECTS OF OPIOID USE

This discussion point coincides with Lesson 10 in the MMH Unit 5: Alcohol, Tobacco, & Other Drugs.

In the musical, the first speaker tells the story of becoming addicted to opioids in high school, turning to opioids in an effort to be “painless.” Some of the responsibility for avoiding risk of opioid misuse lies on us as individuals.

Ask the students to respond to the idea of avoiding risk by using questions like:

- What would you do if you were prescribed opioids?
- Do you feel empowered to advocate for yourself if you are prescribed opioids?
- If your doctor were to prescribe you opioids, how could you ask questions about alternative treatments or medicines?
- What are some ways we can learn to better advocate for ourselves?

DISCUSSION POINT 4: LIVING PAINFULLY

This discussion point coincides with Lesson 6 in the MMH Unit 5: Alcohol, Tobacco, & Other Drugs.

The musical talks about “living painfully” instead of numbing our feelings and experiences.

Talk about the concept of “living painfully” using questions like:

- What do you think it means to “live painfully”?
- What are some healthy ways we can deal with our pain instead of using opioids to numb us?



DISCUSSION POINTS

DISCUSSION POINT 5: STIGMA-FREE RECOVERY IS POSSIBLE

This discussion point coincides with Lessons 6 & 7 in the MMH Unit 5: Alcohol, Tobacco, & Other Drugs.

The musical ends with, “Together, we can tame this disease.” Substance abuse disorder is a disease, not a moral failing or character weakness.

Invite ideas from students about ending stigma and overcoming the disease with questions like:

- How can we as individuals make a difference?
- Did you know that substance use disorder is defined as a disease? How could referring to substance use as a disease help remove stigma?
- What are some ways we can help stop the stigma of substance use disorder?

Healthy recovery is possible—findtreatment.gov

Program Integration

When integrating a program, whether in a single classroom or school-wide, engaging staff and students is critical to success. Teachers and students are more likely to participate in and contribute to program implementation when they see the need for the program and are bought into it (1). Programs which promote a positive school climate and integrate into the way a school functions are more likely to achieve positive outcomes (1,5). Integrating *Painless: The Opioid Musical* into a school culture may be a challenge, but it is important to help students, teachers, and community members see the need for opioid misuse prevention and recognize that this program can be an effective step toward that goal.

Below are some steps that health coordinators and school staff can take to promote the prevention messages of MMH and *Painless*, provide resources to students and the larger community and ultimately help prevent opioid misuse.

1. Share information with parents through MMH parent information
2. Share a short video on *Painless* during an all-school staff meeting
3. Send an email with information to all school staff and parents (see Appendix 1 for template)
4. Put information in a staff and parent newsletter (see Appendix 1 for template)
5. Provide a list of the songs from *Painless* along with their descriptions (see Appendix 1)
6. Place a small story in a local newspaper to provide information about what the school is doing to combat opioid misuse among students in the community



INTEGRATION

OPTIONS FOR EFFECTIVE ADAPTATION

Providers' foundational training in the MMH curriculum is critical to successful program delivery. Adaptations or enhancement, such as those described here, are most successful when structured guidance is given to teachers about where these enhancements may fit within the curriculum without compromising the components most critical to its effectiveness, such as active learning and skill building activities.

The M-HOPE enhancement material provides activity options that are synergistic to the curriculum. Teachers may make additional adaptations to the proposed activities, such as change the questions outlined in the discussion points. A teacher may begin the lesson, for example, by reading the information under Discussion Point 1: Everyone is at Risk and a student may ask a question based on that information that was not listed under the discussion point. If the class begins discussion based on this question and students are participating, this is an acceptable (fidelity-consistent) adaptation. The point of the questions is to prompt students to talk about opioid misuse and the risks associated with it, so changing the questions is acceptable if students are engaged in the discussion. If students are opening up and sharing about their knowledge, understanding, or experiences, it is important to encourage conversation rather than strictly abiding by the written script.

In addition to *Painless* and MMH specific resources, this guide also provides information for implementation-related challenges that may be helpful when deploying *Painless* as a supplement to the MMH curriculum.



BARRIERS

Implementation Barriers to *Painless* as an MMH Enhancement

WHOLE SCHOOL COORDINATION AND SUPPORT

Sometimes there are concerns about how enhancements (such as Painless) will be implemented. Including school leadership, including administrators and curriculum leads, can be helpful as well as informing all staff of these enhancements.

To overcome this barrier:

- Communicate proactively with teachers and staff about the supplemental program (Painless)
- Continue providing ongoing technical assistance per current practices to address questions and ensure they understand their role in the school-based program
- Clearly identify how the roles of teachers, staff, and administration interact with one another
- Offer resources to clear up misunderstandings (e.g. books or websites such as Michigan-open.org)
- Revise informational materials to address misunderstandings and questions that arise from staff, teachers, administrators, and/or parents

PARENT/COMMUNITY MISUNDERSTANDINGS

Parents and community members are often unfamiliar with new programs implemented in schools and may not understand how the school-based program affects their students. The community's perception of authority, change, and government can influence the way school-based programs are accepted by parents and family members of students. A community misunderstanding of the school-based program can affect the implementation in a number of ways, including student attitudes, teacher acceptance, and funding.



BARRIERS

To overcome this barrier:

- Share information for teachers to disseminate to parents and include contact information for pertinent staff members so that parents/guardians can reach out with questions or concerns
- Send an email (See staff email template in Appendix 1) to school staff and administration informing them of the enhancement and how it supports health education
- If the school already sends out a weekly, biweekly, or monthly newsletter, include information about the MMH enhancement program (a template can be found in Appendix 1)
- Share parent/community concerns with administration and staff to ensure the concerns are promptly addressed
- Have program information available (e.g. song summaries; see Appendix 1) available in the main office for parent inspection
- Conduct a parent information meeting to clarify some of the changes parents and community members can expect to see based on the implementation of the program
- Collect data, if possible, about parent/community views to determine if attitudes toward the school-based program are improving with the above initiatives

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN GROUP DISCUSSIONS

It can be difficult sometimes to create an environment where students are willing to speak up in group discussions or ensuring that each student has an opportunity to be heard. Sometimes one or two students will dominate the conversation, not allowing other students an opportunity to voice their thoughts. Other times, students simply prefer not to have discussion at all, leaving the teacher to try and probe students for their thoughts. Some students may be reluctant to share because they fear the response other students may have to their comments. Whether too many students want to share, or no one wants to speak at all, teachers have the challenge of trying to create a healthy atmosphere for students to open up about their thoughts and experiences.



BARRIERS

To overcome this barrier:

- Remind students that all thoughts and viewpoints are welcomed and respected
- Rearrange the classroom so all students and teacher are sitting in a circle and go around the circle responding to the discussion points, allowing each student the opportunity to share
- Be ok with silence
- Remind students who are dominating conversation to allow other students a chance to speak
- Encourage students to respond to one another's thoughts and comments
- If many students are participating, break into smaller groups to allow students to interact with one another and come up with a report to share with the other groups (e.g. ideas about how to stop the stigma of opioid recovery)

TRANSIENT STUDENT POPULATION

Often times students transfer in and out of school districts during the school year. This may cause students to miss a portion of the curriculum and not be aware of what has happened. Because *Painless* is not available to all schools yet, the majority of students who transfer after the class has had an opportunity to see the musical will not have that same opportunity. Even though new students may not be able to see the musical, it is important that they still participate in discussions about opioid misuse.

To overcome this barrier:

- Recap the musical with the students
- Let the students who saw the musical to share their memories
- Meet with new students one-on-one to bring them up to speed about class discussions
- Provide information about *Painless*, including the songs and summaries (see Appendix 1) and the *Painless* website (6)



BARRIERS

ADMINISTRATION/TEACHER/STAFF TURNOVER

The reality of turnover in schools is striking. Many schools experience shortages of teachers, substitute teachers, and staff members and a turnover in all positions, including administration, such as principals and superintendents. These turnovers can create a disruption in the implementation of the school-based program. A new administrator can shift the culture of a school and change the way a program is implemented due to their priorities, personality and working style. Frequency in teacher turnover causes misunderstandings about a teacher's responsibilities in implementing a program with which they are unfamiliar. Many issues related to turnover and shortages can be solved through communication, but may require delicate approaches with the new and veteran staff to facilitate healthy discussions about the program.

To overcome this barrier:

- Ensure new staff and administration promptly receive the necessary training for the school-based program
- Be available to answer questions, offer input and guidance, and provide support for new employees
- Be humble and patient with new staff as it may take some time to adjust to specific school culture and the requirements of the school-based program
- Be aware that a shift in school administration will likely change the overall school climate and culture, not necessarily for better or worse, simply because of the individual leadership style
- Be flexible and adaptable as new administration or teachers are getting used to the school-based program and the roles of individuals in the program may shift slightly as the adjustments are being made
- Maintain open communication and ensure that everyone's questions and concerns are heard

FUNDING

Funding is a precarious situation for many schools. Funding sources can be found in a variety of ways, depending on the program and the available sources. Budget cuts, teacher and staff shortages, and other factors can greatly affect the availability of funds for any school-based program.



BARRIERS

To overcome this barrier:

- Be transparent with staff, community partners, and parents about budget concerns
- Consider using qualified volunteers to support the program and offer assistance to teachers and staff as they carry out their roles in the program
- Consider grant funding for hiring and maintaining program employees
- If possible and applicable, fundraisers for programs can be employed by the school as a whole or through students to raise money from community members (e.g. pop can drives in states with bottle returns or a bake sale put on by a student-led organization)

Next Steps

This guide is designed to provide teachers, staff, and administration with some tools to use when implementing school-based programs such as the supplemental material for the Michigan Model for Health. Schools interested in implementing this program in the future may want to consider the resources and steps necessary to continue. The appendices contain information and resources to assist schools with the implementation of *Painless* and the supplemental materials. More information about the musical can be found at Michigan-open.org/painless. Additional information about opioid misuse prevention can be found at the following websites(7):

- National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), www.drugabuse.gov
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), www.cdc.gov
- Children's Safety Network, www.childrenssafetynetwork.org
- US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), www.samhsa.gov
- National Institutes of Health (NIH), www.nih.gov
- US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), www.dea.gov



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APPENDIX 1

Appendix 1: Examples and Templates

PARENT EMAIL TEMPLATE

Dear Parents of _____,
(high school name)

As more and more people have become aware, the opioid epidemic in America has had devastating effects in rural, suburban, and inner-city communities all across America. In 2018, there were 2,036 opioid related deaths in Michigan alone (Michigan.gov/opioids). Additionally, opioid medication poisoning causes more than 300 deaths in children and teens around the country each year (childrenssafetynetwork.org). One major way to prevent opioid abuse is to educate our youth about the dangers of opioids.

The Michigan High School Opioid Prevention Education (M-HOPE) Enhancement Project is designed to raise awareness and provide prevention education about the dangers associated with opioids through combining the Michigan Model for Health™ (MMH) curriculum with a newly developed opioid prevention musical. The M-HOPE Enhancement Project includes the MMH curriculum as the foundation to teach students about the dangers associated with opioids using a research proven education curriculum containing various tools and activities to be used by teachers. The M-HOPE Project also includes a musical for students called *Painless: The Opioid Musical*, which tells various stories of people whose lives were devastated by opioid abuse and addiction and shares important information about opioid misuse that is consistent with MMH.

Your school is participating in the M-HOPE Enhancement Project to prevent opioid misuse in youth and young adults by raising awareness about the dangers of opioids, while teaching students many skills that will help them prevent drug use and its consequences.

If you have a question about this form or the study, you can contact Susan Franzen or Dr. Andria Eisman at M-HOPE-Enhancement@umich.edu.

Thank you,



APPENDIX 1

STAFF EMAIL TEMPLATE

Dear Staff:

As many of you are aware, opioid misuse is a major problem in schools and communities around the country. In 2018, there were 2,036 opioid related deaths in Michigan alone (Michigan.gov/opioids). We also know that 90% of Americans with a substance abuse problem began before the age of 18 (abovetheinfluence.com). Our school has decided to strengthen our fight against this crisis by working to educate our students about the dangers of opioids.

We have partnered with the University of Michigan's Precision Health and School of Music, Theatre & Dance, Michigan OPEN, and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services to bring *Painless: The Opioid Musical* to our school. Students in our health classes will be attending the musical and given the opportunity to process what they have heard and seen with their classes. You may encounter students who have seen the musical and have questions or concerns about opioid misuse and would like to speak with you about what is on their minds. We ask that you offer a listening ear to students as they are processing their thoughts. If in the process of these discussions a student discusses problems they are facing, please advise them to seek help from the appropriate sources in and out of the school. Please be reminded that if students speak about wanting to harm themselves or others, you must follow the protocol to report these issues.

More information about *Painless* can be found at www.michigan-open.org/painless or in the school office. Attached are the song titles from the musical as well as a brief description of each song.

We hope that *Painless* will be an avenue for students to learn about opioid misuse and will be able to avoid a path of opioid use disorder or seek appropriate help for problems they currently face.

Thank you for your commitment to the health and wellbeing of our students,



APPENDIX 1

NEWSLETTER TEMPLATE

We are starting a section of our curriculum based on the Michigan Model for Health (MMH) where we are looking at the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Our school has an opportunity to provide students with a unique lesson on the rising problem of opioid misuse: Painless: The Opioid Musical. We will be utilizing this musical and supplemental materials to discuss the risks of opioid misuse and how to stay healthy in light of this growing problem. A letter will be sent home with your student with information about the curriculum, the musical, and the supplemental education your student will be participating in. If you have questions about the musical or related curriculum, information is located in the school office. For questions about the research associated with the curriculum you can email the University of Michigan research team which can provide information about the musical and supplemental curriculum at M-HOPE-Enhancement@umich.edu



APPENDIX 1

PARENT LETTER

To the parent of _____,
(student name)

Your child is enrolled in health class and we are preparing to begin our section on Alcohol, Tobacco, & Other Drugs as part of the Michigan Model for Health curriculum. As part of this section, students will be attending a musical created and performed by the University of Michigan's Precision Health and School of Music, Theatre & Dance entitled Painless: The Opioid Musical. As many of us are aware, opioid misuse is a major problem among youth and young adults. This musical was inspired by true stories of opioid addiction and recovery and is designed to engage and educate youth about opioid use disorder. Following the performance, students will be given the opportunity to discuss their thoughts and feelings about the performance.

Students are asked to participate in a survey before and after this unit in our curriculum as part of a study to evaluate the effectiveness of the supplemental materials (the musical and the subsequent discussions) to the current Michigan Model for Health curriculum. Attached is information about the Michigan High School Opioid Prevention (M-HOPE) Enhancement study. Please review this information and reach out if you have any questions or concerns. Additional information about Painless: The Opioid Musical can be found at www.michigan-open.org/painless.

Please be aware that your student may return home with questions or thoughts about what they have seen and heard in the musical. Information about Painless can be found at Michigan-open.org/painless. Song titles and summaries are available in the school office if you are interested in learning more about the content of Painless.

Thank you,

(teacher name)



APPENDIX 1

Painless Song List and Summaries

1. HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO ME?

A group of student begrudgingly complain about a school assembly on opioid addiction that they have to go to.

2. PAINLESS

The assembly speakers introduce themselves, and set the tone for what a life dealing with addiction is like.

3. LITTLE WHITE PILL

The first speaker tells his story of becoming addicted to opioids in high school, after giving up his baseball career for his sweetheart.

4. HEY MR. DOC

The second speaker, a beauty pageant queen, tells her story of doctor shopping-- going to different doctors to convince each of them to give her drugs. Each time she repeats a verse, her lies, exaggerations, and desperation grow more and more.

5. THE BOY IN THE BOX

The third speaker, a young and slightly awkward man, tells the story of the day he broke into his mother's house to steal money to fund his addiction. In going through her basement, he ends up finding a box she had collected of all of his things in preparation for his inevitable funeral.

6. HEY MR. DOC (REPRISE)

The second speaker returns, inspired by the vulnerability of the third speaker. She finishes the story she began telling, finally getting into the gritty details of what she went through.



APPENDIX 1

7. LIE TO ME

The fourth speaker, a doctor recounts his experiences of having to read all of his patients as they come in, attempting to figure out who is telling the truth about their pain and who is lying to receive drugs. This constant struggle eventually tears him apart.

8. A PILL FROM JESSE

The students have fun mocking what they've heard, talking about all of the places they know they can easily get opioids from. At the end of the song, however, they realize how this is no joking matter, and the ease at which they can find the drugs are exactly how this epidemic applies to them.

9. SLIPPING AWAY

The first speaker takes center stage as we begin following his journey out of his addiction that was set up in "Little White Pill." His mother reaches out hoping to show him that he's not yet a lost cause. His community brings him up when he's at his absolute lowest.

10. LITTLE WHITE PILL (REPRISE)

The first speaker finally comes out of the fog he's been in. He tells of his process of recover, as the other speakers begin relating to the steps he had to take. Though the trauma they faced will never fade, they're recovered and received help and are attempting to move on with their lives.

10. PAINLESS (FINALE)

The students say statistics on the opioid crisis. The students themselves have been the ones passing on these stories they heard when they were in the assembly. They choose to let it apply to them. They choose to pass on the stories.



APPENDIX 1



PAINLESS — THE OPIOID MUSICAL —

Michigan OPEN is collaborating with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services to add *Painless* to MDHHS's Michigan Model for Health™ curriculum as a supplemental tool in the Opioid Misuse Prevention unit. With the help of MDHHS, *Painless* will be performed at 10 high schools across Michigan followed by critical discussion and education beginning in the spring of 2020.

Between 1994 and 2007, the rate of painkiller prescriptions made by doctors nearly

doubled

leading into what we now refer to as "the opioid epidemic."



Nearly **50%** of young people who inject heroin start by misusing prescription pain medicine which are **opioids**



Most adolescents who misuse prescription pain relievers are given them for free by a friend or relative.



Drug overdose is the of accidental death in the United States of America, with 70,237 lethal drug overdoses occurring in 2017, alone.

#1
cause

In 2018, **2 million** people

misused prescription opioids for the first time.



Painless was developed by University of Michigan students Jacob Ryan Smith, Noah Kieserman and Peter Scattini under the direction of Vincent J. Cardinal, chair of the U-M Department of Musical Theatre. *Painless* was inspired by stories of individuals from Families Against Narcotics (FAN) who have been impacted by opioid use disorder. This musical aims to educate youth about the prevalence and dangers of the opioid epidemic.

To learn more about *Painless*, please visit michigan-open.org/painless or email us at michiganOPEN@umich.edu.



APPENDIX 1



PAINLESS — THE OPIOID MUSICAL —

Michigan OPEN has partnered with the University of Michigan's Precision Health and School of Music, Theatre & Dance to produce *Painless: The Opioid Musical*. Inspired by true stories of opioid use disorder and recovery, *Painless* aims to educate youth about the prevalence and dangers of the opioid epidemic.

Benefits of participating in the program

- Receive a \$100 stipend
- Gain early access to a high-quality musical performance
- Be part of a pilot study to test the enhanced effectiveness of implementing the *Michigan Model for Health™* (MMH) to address opioid misuse prevention
- Be on the cutting edge of applying implementation science to enhance school health education instruction

Participants agree to do the following...

Teach the MMH ATOD unit and schedule the Painless musical performance at your school*



Share parent survey opt-out letter before you start the unit



Administer two 15 minute on-line surveys with your students



Inform U of M before you begin teaching the ATOD prevention unit



Use our online record keeping system to record which sections of the MMH curriculum that you taught



Participate in two brief interviews with the University of Michigan



*If your school is selected, use at least one supplementary activity from a toolkit.



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3 in 5

teens say prescription pain medication is easy to get from their parents' medicine cabinet

Since 2000, opioid overdose deaths in Michigan have

tripled



We envision a future for *Painless: The Opioid Musical* that entails:



Hosting workshops



Widening our reach



Creating a cast album

Painless was developed by University of Michigan students Jacob Ryan Smith, Noah Kieserman and Peter Scattini under the direction of Vincent J. Cardinal, chair of the U-M Department of Musical Theatre. *Painless* was inspired by stories of individuals from Families Against Narcotics (FAN) who have been impacted by opioid use disorder.

To learn more about *Painless*, please visit michigan-open.org/painless or email us at michiganOPEN@umich.edu.





APPENDIX 2

Appendix 2: Implementing School-Based Programs

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The ability of an organization to implement a new program is paramount to the success of the program. There are a few things which leadership should consider when determining if a school or school district will benefit from investing in a school-based program. Begin by identifying the stakeholders (such as students, students' families, staff, the school board, community members, and funders). Individuals and organizations which have made a financial commitment to the success of the school-based program are vital and should be included in the decision-making process as much as possible(1).

When stakeholders have been identified, a school can begin to examine its capacity to support and sustain a school-based program. Implementing any program at any level requires resources: time, money, and people. These factors determine if the school-based program can be successfully and efficiently implemented(1). Studies have found that longer programs are not necessarily better at achieving results, but peer involvement in the intervention is important for success (5). With this in mind, organizations should look to determine how to use student interactions while implementing a program to generate the most positive outcomes.

COSTS AND ECONOMIC EVALUATION

Costs are a critical aspect related to if and how programs are adopted. Program and implementation costs to the school often vary depending on the geographical location (i.e. the city and state which the program is being implemented) and the availability of funding from external sources (i.e. federal and grant funding). Leadership should be aware that costs of school-based programs will vary from school to school, even within a single district, and should be analyzed independently. As administration evaluates the costs and benefits of a potential school-based program, there are often ways to help reduce the costs of the program based on the available personnel and independent funding. These avenues should be evaluated to determine the resources already available to help with program implementation(1).



APPENDIX 2

Evaluating costs is also important in terms of the sustainability of a program or intervention. Not only should schools evaluate whether the costs of implementation are affordable or feasible at the time of implementation, but should also consider the costs of sustaining the program over time. Changes in the rates of behaviors will only be seen when communities provide effective, sustainable services to students (6). When implementing a program like M-HOPE enhancement, it is important to evaluate if the school can sustain the program and continue to offer the production of Painless: The Opioid Musical to students.

PROMOTION

Providing a clear vision of the school-based program and why it is important to the school or district can help avoid resistance to the implementation of the program. Individuals are less apt to offer their support of a program if they do not see the need for it, which can generate feelings of resentment or apathy. However, when administrators, teachers, parents, and others agree that the outcomes of the school-based program (e.g. school safety or reductions in drug use) are important issues in their schools and are discontent with the way things are currently working, they are more likely to buy in to the need for change.

Once the need has been identified and the school-based program selected as a solution, it is helpful to prepare messaging to deliver to each of the following groups to prepare for implementation: school superintendents, principals, administration, teachers, other staff (such as recess and lunch monitors, janitors, and paraprofessionals), and parents and community members. Each group will be differently affected by the implementation of the program, so the messaging should look different for each audience. Additionally, the timing of those messages will look different depending on who is the “frontline” of implementation of the school-based program. It is important to use a variety of different channels and methods of communication to ensure everyone is prepared for program implementation. Some examples of methods to communicate are: newsletters, emails, in-person meetings, and community forums(1).



APPENDIX 2

TRAINING

Prior to implementing a new school-based program, the school must decide what staff will obtain trainings and how many sessions will be necessary to ensure everyone is appropriately trained. Factors to consider include whether the training will be offered online, in person, or at a destination, and if training will be staggered over time or completed all at once. It is also important to consider the substitute teachers and other staff who will need training. It is strongly recommended that all staff attend all trainings, but realistically, it may not be possible for all staff to immediately be trained for the program. Administration and leadership need to determine what the best course of action is for training and which staff should be trained first and which can wait or be excluded from training altogether(1).

DEFINING LEADERSHIP

Supportive administration is essential to successful implementation because administration is at the heart of how a school operates. The administrator is responsible for setting the tone of relationships in the school between administration, teachers, staff, and students. When implementing a school-based program, it is helpful to create a worksheet or guide to help the school determine the necessary skills and experiences required for staff to flourish when implementing the school-based program. This can be helpful when hiring new staff or when looking internally to determine if the school already has access to people who are well-suited for a specific role. Try to schedule a meeting or phone call with an administrator a head of time to work with the administrator and ensure administrator buy-in(1).