

TOOLKIT

# PAINLESS

THE OPIOID MUSICAL

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# INTRODUCTION



**Painless: The Opioid Musical** was developed to address the urgent need for opioid misuse prevention among adolescents and teens.

Inspired by true stories of opioid use disorder and recovery, Painless aims to educate youth about the prevalence and dangers of opioid misuse.

The goal of this toolkit is to provide teachers with resources to engage students in conversations about substance use disorder to include:

- Foundational discussion points
- School-based program integration guidance with suggested tailoring and adaptation strategies
- Tools and resources for integrating Painless into the health curriculum
- Communication strategies for staff and parents
- Song lyrics and descriptions

Many thanks go out to the partners collaborating on this prevention work:



# GUIDED DISCUSSION

## STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Encouraging students to speak up in group discussions and ensuring that each student has an opportunity to be heard can be difficult. Sometimes one or two students will dominate the conversation. Other times, students are reluctant to share their thoughts, leaving the teacher to try and probe students for their thoughts. 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.

## DISCUSSION FORMAT

Ask the class how they would like to have this discussion. Options could include:

- In the current seating arrangement
- In a large circle together
- Start in small groups, then reconvene for a larger group discussion
- Spend a few minutes journaling thoughts privately before beginning the group discussion (see Appendix for journaling handouts).

## ESTABLISHING DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

Ask the students to come up with some guidelines that everyone supports to help this be a meaningful conversation. Wait for the students to suggest items before adding your own. If there is a long silence (~2 minutes), suggest one and get feedback. Some suggested guidelines could include:

- All thoughts and viewpoints are welcomed and respected
- It's okay if someone doesn't want to share
- Step up, step back (if you realize you're sharing too much, take a step back to let a couple others share before you share again)
- If we need to take a break, someone can ask for one
- No phones during the discussion
- If we make mistakes, that's okay!

**Consider allowing students a few minutes to journal about each prompt prior to group discussions. Handouts with journaling space can be found in Appendix 2.**

# GUIDED DISCUSSION

Below are suggested key points and questions designed to guide discussion and help students delve deeper into the topics appearing in the musical. The goal is to work together to develop strategies to avoid prescription drug misuse and decrease risk of developing future substance use disorders.

We recommend a minimum of one discussion point to begin conversation sparked by Painless.

## DISCUSSION POINT 1: EVERYONE IS AT RISK

1. Select one or more of these statistics to begin the discussion.

The musical ends with several statistics, including:

- Since 1999, over one million Americans have died from drug overdoses.
- In 2021 alone, over 70,000 Americans died from an overdose.
- Nearly half of young people who inject heroin or use fentanyl start by misusing prescription pain medicines, which are opioids.
- Today, drug dealers can mix dangerous substances like fentanyl and cocaine in with illegal pills, increasing the risk for overdose and death from a single pill

The numbers are alarming and show that everyone is at risk—this applies to each of you in this room.

2. Solicit students' feedback on the statistics and encourage further conversation about risk.

Example questions:

- What factors have contributed to the opioid epidemic?
- What is prescription misuse?
- What is the connection between opioid use and heroin use?

# GUIDED DISCUSSION

## DISCUSSION POINT 2: AVOIDING RISK

While opioid use disorder can happen to anyone, there are ways to decrease risk - one of the easiest ways is to avoid opioid misuse.

1. Have the students listen to 'Get a Pill From Jesse' or read the lyrics
2. Solicit students' feedback on the song and encourage further conversation about avoiding risk.

Example questions:

- What are some of the ways that people in the musical got opioids?
- What are some healthy alternatives to using opioids?
- What are some strategies to handle pressure to misuse opioids?

## CAST ALBUM

Need to re-listen to a song from the performance? Scan this QR code to listen to the cast album of Painless: The Opioid Musical on your preferred streaming service.



**SCAN TO LISTEN  
TO THE ALBUM**

# GUIDED DISCUSSION

## DISCUSSION POINT 3: EFFECTS OF OPIOID MISUSE ARE WIDESPREAD

The musical portrayed several perspectives of how lives can be affected by opioid use disorder differently.

1. Have the students listen to or read the lyrics one of the following songs
  - Boy in the Box - describes the person stealing from his mom to pay for his substance use
  - Hey Mr. Doc - depicts a young woman going from doctor to doctor to receive a prescription.
2. Solicit students' feedback on the song. Encourage further conversation about who is impacted by the effects of opioid misuse and how.

Example questions:

- How does the song portray the lives of the people suffering from opioid use disorder? What were some consequences they experienced?
- How do you think an opioid use disorder interferes with daily life?

## PAINLESS: THE OPIOID MUSICAL

Need to re-watch part of the performance? Scan this QR code to see a full-length video of Painless: The Opioid Musical!



SCAN TO  
WATCH THE  
PERFORMANCE



## DISCUSSION POINT 4: SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER IS A DISEASE

Stigma, or negative stereotypes, about people with substance use disorder can prevent them from seeking help. It is important to remember that substance use disorder is a disease, not a moral failing or character weakness.

1. Solicit students' feedback on the impact stigma may have on people with substance use disorder.

- Did you know that substance use disorder is defined as a disease?
- What are some ways we can help stop the stigma of substance use disorder?

INSTEAD OF:	TRY SAYING:
Addict/abuser	Person with SUD/person living with substance use disorder/person who uses drugs
Alcoholic	Person with alcohol use disorder/person living with alcohol use disorder
Clean/dirty urine (urine testing)	Urine negative for/positive for or substance not detected/detected
Clean (person)	Person in recovery from substance use/person in remission from substance use disorder or addiction
Criminal/felon/ex-con	Person with justice involvement/person with criminal legal system involvement
Drug offender	Person arrested or prosecuted for substances
Fired/terminated	Guided to more appropriate treatment setting
Illicit	Criminalized
Medication assisted treatment (MAT)/opioid replacement therapy	Medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD) Medication for addiction treatment (MAT)
Nonadherent/noncompliant	Not using as prescribed
Relapse/slip	Resume use/restart use/recurrence of use
Strike/deviation	Concern
Drug abuse	Substance misuse
Reformed addict	Recovering patient

# INTEGRATION

## PROGRAM INTEGRATION

When integrating any 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. Programs which promote a positive school climate and integrate into the way a school functions are more likely to achieve positive outcomes.

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 including this musical can be an effective step toward that goal.

Below are some steps that health coordinators, health teachers and school staff can take to promote prevention and provide resources to students and the larger community to create a positive impact.

Coordinate with school staff for student support (e.g. guidance counselors, school psychologist, etc.)

Communicate with parents for at-home support (Appendix 1: sample email templates) and share additional Painless content upon request

Provide additional Painless content (videos, album, lyric sheet, website) to help inform school staff and parents.

Maintain open communication and ensure that everyone's questions and concerns are heard.

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## PAINLESS.ORG

Additional information about opioid misuse prevention can be found at the following websites:

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

# 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. We have partnered with the University of Michigan to bring Painless: The Opioid Musical to our school. Students in our health classes will be attending the musical and given the opportunity to discuss with their classes.

You may encounter students who have seen the musical and have questions or concerns, and we ask that you offer a listening ear as they are processing their thoughts. If a student shares any 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.

We hope that Painless will be an avenue for students to learn about opioid use disorder and prevent substance use or seek appropriate help for problems they currently face. More information about Painless can be found at [painless.org](http://painless.org).

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

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(Name)

# APPENDIX 1



## PARENT LETTER TEMPLATE

To the parent of \_\_\_\_\_,

As more and more people have become aware, the opioid epidemic in America has had devastating effects communities all across America. In 2022, there were over 2,800 opioid related deaths in Michigan alone ([Michigan.gov/opioids](https://www.michigan.gov/opioids)). One major way to prevent opioid abuse is to educate our youth about the dangers of opioids.

To help educate our school on opioid use disorder and it's impacts, students will be attending a musical created and performed by the University of Michigan's School of Music, Theatre & Dance entitled Painless: The Opioid Musical. Painless is inspired by true stories of opioid use disorder and recovery.

Students are asked to participate in an anonymous survey, and will be given an opportunity to engage in class discussion after the performance. Please reach out if you have any questions or concerns.

Additional information about Painless can be found at [painless.org](https://painless.org).

Thank you,

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name)

# APPENDIX 2

## DISCUSSION POINT 1: EVERYONE IS AT RISK

The musical ends with several statistics, including:

- Since 1999, over one million Americans have died from drug overdoses.
- In 2021 alone, over 70,000 Americans died from an overdose.
- Nearly half of young people who inject heroin start by misusing prescription pain medicines, which are opioids.
- Today, drug dealers can mix dangerous substances like fentanyl and cocaine in with illegal pills, increasing the risk for overdose and death from a single pill.

What factors have contributed to the opioid epidemic?

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What is prescription misuse?

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What is the connection between opioid use and heroin use?

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# APPENDIX 2

## DISCUSSION POINT 2: AVOIDING RISK

While opioid use disorder can happen to anyone, there are ways to decrease risk - one of the easiest ways is to avoid opioid misuse.

Listen to “A Pill From Jesse” and consider the following questions:

What are some of the ways that people in the musical got opioids?

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What are some healthy alternatives to using opioids?

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What are some strategies to handle pressure to misuse opioids?

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# APPENDIX 2

## DISCUSSION POINT 3: EFFECTS OF OPIOID MISUSE ARE WIDESPREAD

The musical portrayed several perspectives of how lives can be affected by opioid use disorder differently.

Listen to “Boy in the Box” or “Hey Mr. Doc” and consider the following questions:

How does the song portray the lives of the people suffering from opioid use disorder? What were some of the consequences they experienced?

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How do you think an opioid use disorder interferes with daily life?

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# APPENDIX 2

## DISCUSSION POINT 4: SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER IS A DISEASE

Stigma, or negative stereotypes, about people with substance use disorder can prevent them from seeking help. It is important to remember that substance use disorder is a disease, not a moral failing or character weakness.

Did you know that substance use disorder is defined as a disease?

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What are some ways we can help stop the stigma of substance use disorder?

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# APPENDIX 3

## SONG LIST AND SUMMARIES

### 1. HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO ME?

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

### 2. PAINLESS

The 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 3

## 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 recovery, as the other speakers begin relating to the steps he had to take. Though the trauma they faced will never fade, they have recovered and received help and are attempting to move on with their lives.

## 11. 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 4

SONG #1 \_

## HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO ME?

SONG LYRICS \_

Another meeting that they call us to  
What's it today?  
Another lab about addiction  
Cool.  
Wasn't that last Friday?

Every week a different case of  
"shoulda done it better"  
"don't be like me"  
Every week a new assignment  
And now they come and complain to us  
Impassionately

How does this apply to me?  
Good kid good grades  
Except one c.  
How does this matter?  
Do they want to make us sad?  
Or feel sorry?  
I mean I do!!  
But it's just that we have places to be!

Oo wah

Another chance for them to waste our time  
"hey drugs are bad"  
We know.  
I'm working hard and I'm doing fine  
And yet they preach to me like they're my  
mom and dad

Oh! Every week a different case of  
"don't go down that path"  
"are you choosing the right friends?"  
Every week a new assignment  
On how the means don't justify the ends

How does this apply to me?  
Good group, good life!  
Guys, seriously!!

What are they proving?  
They won't stop what we're doing  
A drink or smoke on weekends  
And that's it!  
Guaranteed!

So stop with the teachings,  
Agendas, the preaching  
And get us to where we need to be! Oo wah  
Oo wah  
Oo wah

How does this matter?  
Oo wah  
How does this matter?  
Oo wah  
How does this matter?  
Oo wah  
This doesn't matter!

How does this apply to me?  
This doesn't matter!  
How does this apply to me?  
This doesn't matter!  
This does not apply to me!

# APPENDIX 4

## SONG #2 \_ **PAINLESS**

### SONG LYRICS \_

Coach said to play the game right  
To swing and to always push through  
My dad said to keep the ball down your sight  
And that “son, schools will be on their knees  
for you.”

Mom said I was a beauty to see  
A marvelously unique kid  
I lived for eighteen whole years  
Doing nothing I ever was told was forbid

But I’m trying something new  
Something to numb and make sure I make do

I could be painless  
I could be painless  
Though the world seems aimless  
I found a way  
To make the pain go away  
A life lead painlessly  
Yes, that’s the life for me

My son was gonna aim for the stars  
To show everybody who his parents are  
But one day, he finds a cure for the ache  
A pill he can pop to guarantee he’ll go far

And we don’t know what to do  
They’re hooked and they’re numb and they  
don’t have a clue

I could be painless  
He was destined for greatness!  
I could be painless  
Can nobody save us?  
It makes me feel weightless!

There is a way  
Is there a way?  
To make the pain go away  
To make it go away?  
To finally feel free  
Can we set them free?  
That feels better to me  
You don’t need to be

A life lived painlessly  
Painless!  
Painlessly!  
Painlessly!  
These are the lives you’ll see.

# APPENDIX 4

## SONG #3 \_

### LITTLE WHITE PILL

#### SONG LYRICS \_

I have never loved something so much  
I have never loved something so much  
So I missed the game, who cares, so what?  
Rushin' through my brain, stuck in a rut  
I have never loved something, oh...

Started out as a highschool freshie  
Cocky; thinkin' I was better than the rest, see?  
Cause I could play ball like no other  
I was tearin' up the field and I was swingin'  
like a slugger and I  
Smoked a little weed from the age of 13  
Because everybody did it and I wanted to be  
seen I hung with the guys that my mom didn't  
like  
Hung with the girl that I loved each night'

'assumed I was set, had a beautiful life  
Turned down full rides, for a beautiful wife  
But the love didn't last, had a breakup fight  
And the pain so deep, cut like a knife  
And a friend said "Man, what she did ain't  
right  
But if you take this pill, you'll be high as a kite"  
And I wanted to be numb, I wasn't fit for my  
frown And I wish I never did it but I washed it  
down  
And ooh...

I have never loved something so much  
I have never loved something so much  
So I missed the game, who cares, so what?  
Rushin' through my brain, stuck in a rut  
Drownin' in my skin, where can I hide?  
Mirror on the wall shows yellow eyes  
Man it's getting cold, not just outside  
Man I'm feeling old for twenty five

Took a turn and it caused some friction  
Stealing from my mom, couldn't fund my  
addiction Blacked out, took the cash out, heard a  
shout  
"you can have a twenty but I'm kicking you out"  
A little white pill went from one to zero  
And I wish that was it, what a sober hero  
But I went and bought a needle, said I never  
would shoot  
It's the price of the vice, what a logical route

I had no control, I was feelin' sour  
I had lost my home and I had lost my power  
So the only way was down, couldn't ask for help  
Cause I truly believed it was good for my health  
Take it away? Then it would all come back  
All the wasted opportunity I'd have to unpack  
So I tied up my arm, then I took a deep breath  
And I thought it was relief - I was playing with  
death But ooh...

I have never loved something so much  
I have never loved something so much  
So I missed the game, who cares, so what?  
Rushin' through my brain, stuck in a rut  
Drownin' in my skin, where can I hide?  
Mirror on the wall shows yellow eyes  
Man it's getting cold, not just outside  
Man I'm feeling old for twenty five

I could be painless  
I have never loved something so much  
Painless  
I have never loved something so much  
Painless  
I have never loved something so much  
And I will never love something so much

# APPENDIX 4

## SONG #4 \_ **HEY MR. DOC**

### SONG LYRICS \_

Hey Mr. Doc I'll tell you what's going on  
I got a crick in my back that's got me feeling  
all wrong  
There's a tingle in my spine I got from  
standing in line  
At the beauty show I'm in, ya know  
I'm feeling just fine

But you say you got something to take this  
pain away? I wouldn't say no if you wanna  
make my whole day Without your generosity, I  
couldn't strive to be the queen  
Of Michigan, yeah this again should happen  
next week

Hey Mr. Doctor,  
Yeah hey Mr. Doc, yeah  
Throughout all this misfortune, you knew I  
don't need a surgeon  
So thank you Mr. Doctor, yeah  
For being my rock.

Hey! Mr. Doc, I don't know how to say this  
I got an irritated ankle and a twitch in my wrist  
Last night in town I fell right down while  
wearing my new sequin gown  
And now I'm scared I can't compete and  
Well you get the gist

But if you'd be a dear, there is a fix I hear  
An antidote that fixed my winning season last  
year  
Don't worry doc, I know the drill, I'll only take a  
single pill  
And suddenly the way I'll win this pageant is  
clear

Hey Mr. Doctor,  
Yeah hey Mr. Doc, yeah  
Thanks for your assistance, this'll really go the  
distance So thank you Mr. Doctor,  
Now first place is a lock.

# APPENDIX 4

## SONG #5 \_

### THE BOY IN THE BOX

#### SONG LYRICS \_

Picture frames  
Framing old remains  
Of lives I'd forgot I lived  
Nintendo games  
And missing names  
With faces that cause a rift

Stuck in cardboard boxes  
Drenched in mold and dust  
My body's sick and shaking but my  
Mind's in wanderlust

Torn movie stubs  
Signs for school clubs  
And my picture with whitey ford  
A boy in bathtubs  
His friend jacob's  
Old tony hawk skateboard

Where'd the boy in  
All these photos go?  
I lurch in pain  
I guess I'll never know

But he looks at me and says you'll be okay  
He smiles at me so modestly it's almost a cliché  
With no doubts about who he is, what he'll be  
No complications or bad history  
Just smiling in his dad's old corduroy  
So why do I not recognize this boy?

His first school dance  
And that knowing glance  
Saying he would come out on top  
When he took a chance  
Two weeks in advance  
With time off from the truck stop

A perfect night by candlelight with her  
When she taught him how to truly be mature

Now he looks at me and memories of it fade  
He smiles at me so modestly and I just feel afraid  
He has no idea what he'll become, who he'll be

Clueless of problems and bad history  
Just smiling in his dad's old corduroy  
And I find that I start to hate this boy  
And so I reach  
And then I rip those old polaroids  
And watch as they drift from my hands to the floor  
I start to sweat  
And then I feel that I need my fix

Looking, I'm looking and throwing the pictures  
Trying to get to the bottom at last  
Dozens of scrapbooks and books filled with scripture  
Stand in between me and all of her cash

I see a box  
A smaller box  
And I lengthen my arm  
And imagine the high  
As I pry the thing open  
And see what's inside

is my box. In it was the funeral service my mom had  
prepared for me. Waiting.

And he looks at me and asks if I'm okay  
He smiles at me so modestly as I read words in gray  
We thank you for gathering  
To honor my son  
I still imagine  
What he could have done  
That driven kid in his dad's corduroy

I can't believe how much she missed her boy!

And I look at him and tears fill up my eyes  
My heart beats fast and then I realize  
My mom finally gave up for the long hall  
She sat there and waited expecting the call  
And I curse the day that all of this began  
How that dream filled boy became this man

But I start to recognize that corduroy  
And pray someday I'll be more like that boy.



# APPENDIX 4

SONG # 6 \_

## HEY MR. DOC (REPRISE)

SONG LYRICS \_

Hey Mr. Doc!  
Look I don't know what to do  
I'm in excruciating pain and my last hope is you  
No, I've never felt this way before, my boyfriend  
threw my to the floor  
And ripped my dress and broke my crown, and all  
out of the blue!

Without something to help me out and numb the  
pain, well then I doubt  
I'll ever have a season I can tell my dying mom  
about Doc I know you studied hard, to heal the  
hurt in your backyard  
I beg and plead you'll help me get out of this  
drought

So hey mr. Doctor  
Yeah hey mr. Doc, yeah  
With your stethoscope and coat, I know that you're  
my only hope  
And if after all of this you said nope, I'd be  
shocked.

I have never loved something so much  
I have never loved something so much  
I have never loved something so much  
And I will never love something so much so

Hey mr. Doc, I'll do whatever you want  
I've got a craving, I need saving, you're my one  
confidant  
I was up all night feeling alright until the sweats  
came and the fight  
It busted loose, I've no excuse, I need some stuff  
or it's no use

I know I'll never see my mom or dad again  
My pageant days are over and I've lost every friend  
But with a pill or some powder, I could pay you by the  
hour  
Look if I don't get my fix then this might really be the  
end

So hey mr. Doctor  
Yeah hey mr. Doc, yeah  
I'll do anything, I'll dance and sing, I'll be your puppet  
on a string  
Just give me what I'm looking for and then we can talk

Hey mr. Doctor  
Hey mr. Doc, yeah  
Hey mr. Doctor  
Thank you for always having what I need in stock  
Yeah, thanks, mr. Doc

# APPENDIX 4

## SONG #7 \_ LIE TO ME

### SONG LYRICS \_

The patient's in  
They look my way  
I ask how they've been  
And of course they'll say

"here's what went wrong,  
Here are my problems  
There's stuff with my mom"  
And I watch as it blossoms to

Hey doc! Ya know I need some help  
I've heard there are things you can do  
And I'm forced into a game of hide and seek  
With the highest stakes if I lose

I think they  
Lie to me  
Thinking I won't  
Try and see  
The way they don't entertain solutions  
But pills and vicodin  
Through all of their delusions  
They don't stop when  
They've clearly shown their cards  
I'm ahead of them by yards  
And send them home

And now I'm alone  
And I think

Where've they been?  
What have they been doing?  
And what if I'm wrong?  
Yes, the spiral starts ensuing

'cause I ask myself this every time I say no  
It's hard not to resist  
When it's all touch and go

Hey doc! You'd be better get some help  
Because at times I don't know what to do  
I hate this stupid game of hide and seek  
Because it's hard making decisions off of every  
little clue

I swear they  
Lie to me  
Thinking I won't try to see  
The way they ask for oxycontin by name  
Or how their pain is a ten  
They act the same as they complain again  
They've clearly shown their cards  
I'm ahead of them by yards

And I send them home  
Now I'm alone

And in sets the reality  
The chain of events that's right in front of me  
They tell me the awful way that they feel  
And there's just no way for me to know if it's real

And it's horrifying for me to claim this  
But if it's real then I could make them painless  
I could make them painless

But then what if they're lying?  
What if I'm writing  
A future young addict who's constantly fighting  
For bigger thrills, taking plenty more pills  
And it's these fears that keep me up at night with chills

The doubt sets in  
And I repeat this over and over again

I think they  
Lie to me  
No matter what I see  
My judgements flawed,  
I grin and nod  
My conscience breaks under this facade  
I don't have any cards  
I falling by yards

And then I'm left alone  
And then I head back home  
And maybe not consciously  
But to clear my conscience I guarantee  
I did nothing wrong.  
Yes I lie to me.

# APPENDIX 4

## SONG #8 \_

### A PILL FROM JESSE

#### SONG LYRICS \_

Jesse says his mom just got knee surgery  
Doo doo doo doo doo doo  
Jesse says she got some pills  
That's what he tells me  
That's what he tells me!

Jesse wants to buy a new guitar  
Jesse sneaks some pills out from her jar  
And sells them for a fee  
So apparently  
I could get a pill from Jesse!

Doo doo doo doo  
I could get a pill from Jesse!

Molly says she knows a guy out in D.C.  
Doo doo doo doo doo  
Molly says he comes in town pretty frequently  
He comes town frequently!

Molly says this guy can sell it all  
Molly has the number you could call  
But if life is getting testy  
And you don't want to get messy  
Get a pill from Jesse!

Doo doo doo doo  
I could get a pill from Jesse!  
Robert plays football, all star varsity  
Robert has to get some help, though  
Secretly.  
He needs help secretly!

Robert sometimes lies to his Uncle John  
Robert takes his morphine when he's gone  
And does it casually  
But when his uncle isn't free  
He could get a pill from Jesse!

Doo doo doo doo  
I could get a pill from Jesse! Doo doo doo doo  
And getting it is easy  
Doo doo doo doo

That's how this applies to me! The problem:  
It's too easy  
It's us.

# APPENDIX 4

## SONG #9 \_ **SLIPPING AWAY**

### SONG LYRICS \_

Oh, I'm going down  
I'm falling apart  
I'm starting to drown  
I want to restart

The feeling's familiar  
I've been here before  
I've struggled in silence  
But not anymore

Cause I found a cure  
For the blues  
You know that percocet,  
Vyvanse, or xanax will do

They're not hard to find  
Just takes a lie  
"Doc, there's an ache in my back  
In the base of my spine"

And soon I'm  
Slipping away  
All at once I'm forgetting  
My horrible day  
And all that's upsetting  
Now I'm freed from the fear  
And I'm freed from the sorrow  
Like god's in my ear  
Saying, "Face life tomorrow"  
But for today,  
I'm slipping away  
I'm slipping away  
I'm slipping away

made every game  
I owned the front row  
I'd shout out his name  
And see his face glow

He would be a pro  
If it weren't for his knee  
Pills for the pain, one a day turned to three  
And that was the start of complacency  
How do I reach you to say

I see you slipping away  
Can you hear me? I'm calling I'm here for the catch  
But you're fixed on the falling

Your mother is here  
I keep giving and giving  
But what more can I give  
If you give up on living?

Slipping away  
I can feel myself falling Slipping away  
I'm too weak to keep calling Slipping away

My fever's not breaking  
And mom, I am shaking Please make it okay

I'm slipping away.  
How did you slip away?  
I'm slipping away.  
How did you slip away?  
I'm slipping away.  
Please don't slip away!

I could be painless  
I could be painless  
I could be painless  
Nothing is painless

# APPENDIX 4

SONG #10 \_

## LITTLE WHITE PILL (REPRISE)

SONG LYRICS \_

Hope  
Hope  
A light crashed in  
Got clean, still clean, finally feeling my skin  
Call it x-I like the roman numeral  
12 steps that I take to dodge my own funeral

One, I'm a slave to the drug  
I admit it  
Two, but the world came alive when I quit it  
Three, four, take an inventory  
And five, six, seven give way to glory

Eight, to the people that hate who I became  
Make amends  
Nine, ten, say goodbye to shame  
Turning up a new leaf with 11 and 12  
I'm a meditated man, I'm controlling myself

Still, I grapple with the pain  
And I grieve what is gone  
But I own my mistakes  
And I keep moving on

It's a rough and tumble road that I've already  
drivin' But I got a clear view and I'm grate-ful to be  
livin', singin'

I have never loved something so much  
I have never loved something so much  
Once I missed the game, who cares, so what?  
Now I take the blame, keep that door shut  
Finally in my skin, no need to hide  
Mirror on the wall shows innocent eyes  
Babe it's getting cold, let's go inside  
Man I'm feelin' young for 35

# APPENDIX 4

SONG #10 \_

## **PAINLESS (FINALE)**

SONG LYRICS \_

I could be painless

Since 1999, more than 1 million Americans died of drug overdoses. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, that number has only gone up.

I could be painless

Most people who inject heroin or use fentanyl start by misusing prescription painkillers, which are opioids.

Today, drug dealers can mix dangerous substances like fentanyl and cocaine in with illegal pills, increasing the risk for overdose and death from a single pill.

Some people with chronic pain benefit from their prescription opioids. Their pain is real and their stories are different from those you've heard here.

Opioid use disorder is a disease, not a moral failing.

Healthy recovery is possible.

If we could live life painfully maybe we could tame this disease

We can't avoid pain. But we can try to avoid suffering.

We pass on these stories. And together we can:

Tame this disease

# APPENDIX 5

## IMPLEMENTING SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS

### ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

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 (2). With this in mind, organizations should look to determine how to use student interactions while implementing a program to generate the most positive outcomes.

### COST 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.

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 (3). When implementing a program like Painless, it is important to evaluate if the school can sustain the program and continue to offer the musical to students.

# APPENDIX 5

## IMPLEMENTING SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS

### 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. 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).

### 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).



# APPENDIX 5

## IMPLEMENTING SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS

### 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).

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# QUESTIONS? CONTACT US.

<https://www.painless.org/>

[www.michigan-open.org](http://www.michigan-open.org)



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