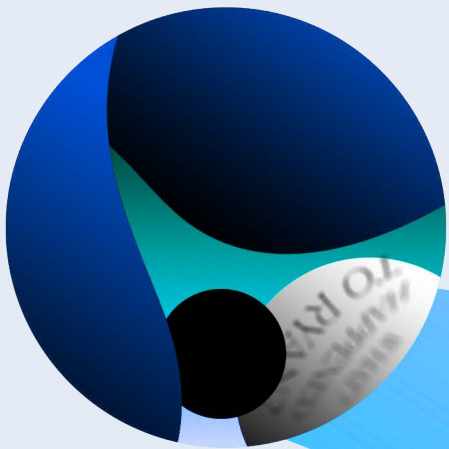


# ARTIST & PARTNER TOOLKIT



MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH · MAY 2023

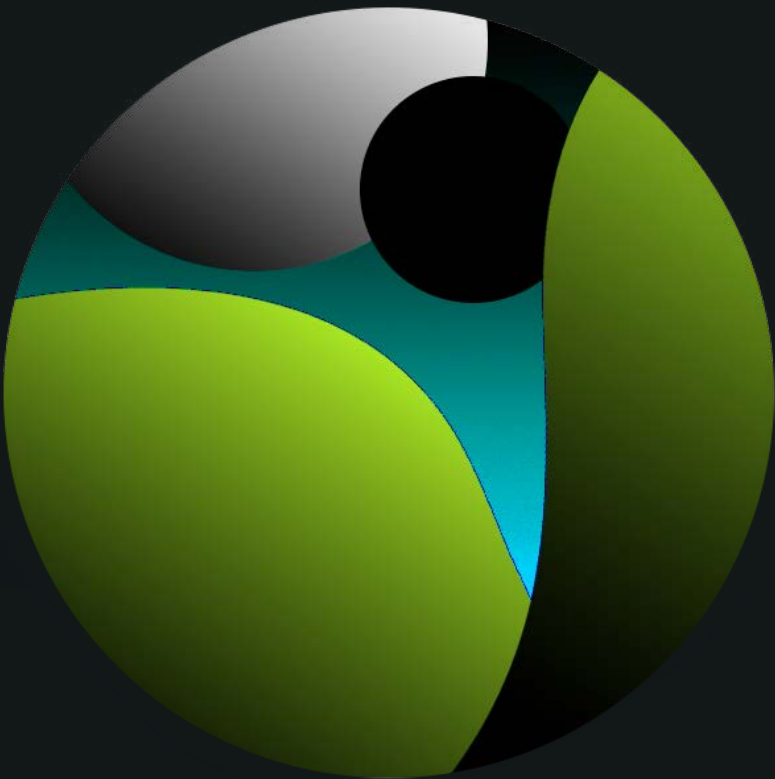




HOW DO WE  
SHOW UP  
AS OUR  
BEST SELVES?

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# FOR ARTISTS

## 1. Where can I turn to for help with anxiety, depression or other mental health challenges?

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Asking for help can be scary sometimes so congratulations on taking that first step. There are many resources available, from free support groups to therapists and psychiatrists that can help when you are experiencing mental health challenges. You can also start with the resources found at [soundmindlive.org/resources](https://soundmindlive.org/resources). Now may also be a good time to reach out to friends and family members that are in your support circle and let them know what is going on and how they can best support you during this time.

*Response Provided By Sound Mind Live*

If you are ready to talk to a therapist for more long-term help and you are a U.S. resident, [Backline](#) has Case Managers available to speak with. They can help you find a clinician who can meet your specific needs within your budget.

*Response Provided By Backline*

## 2. What is meditation and how can it help?

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Meditation is the practice of staying present in your environment; it can look many different ways and have many different intentions. It can be sitting in stillness and in silence. It can be deep breathing. It can be sitting in nature and observing the world around you. It can be a sound bath or listening to calming music. Rather than trying to focus on not thinking, shift your focus to sounds and objects outside of your own mind to allow you to lower your stress levels and get away from your intrusive thought patterns.

*Response Provided By Backline*

There's a wonderful app we recommend with a free version available called [Insight Timer](#), with access to different types of meditation for you to try out and discover what you enjoy. Find something you can stick with as a regular practice even if it's just for 5 minutes a day.

*Response Provided By CoMuse*



### 3. What can I do to maintain and prioritize my mental health?

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Prioritizing your mental health is a journey, not a destination. It's a daily work-in-progress for the rest of your life sort-of-thing. As artists, it's important to allow the space to feel our emotions as they are signals to pay attention to. Paying attention and staying curious also allows space (and time!) to be curious about what's going on inside of ourselves without being so quick to judge or react.

*Response Provided By CoMuse*

### 4. I don't have health insurance, is there any free support available to me?

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There are a lot of free, low-cost, and sliding scale resources available. I'd suggest checking out your local chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) as they often run free support groups for a variety of mental health conditions. Additionally, organizations like MusiCares, The Entertainment Community Fund, and the SIMS Foundation in Austin provide financial support for mental health care costs for those in the music industry. You can also check out the [Sound Mind Live resource page](#) which has a number of different free and low-cost resources including those specific to the music industry.

*Response Provided By Sound Mind Live*

Grants are also available through organizations like Sweet Relief Musicians' Fund and Music Health Alliance.

*Response Provided By Backline*

MusiCares offers eligible individuals financial assistance for mental health and addiction-recovery services and other needs that might be impacting one's general coping. MusiCares' [free weekly support groups](#) can complement other free groups and community supports.

*Response Provided By MusiCares*

### 5. How do I talk to my friends or family about what I am experiencing?

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Talking to friends and family about mental health can be difficult but starting the conversation can have a lot of potential benefits - including increased support and reassurance when you need it the most.

When you start the conversation, meet your loved one where they are at. Consider how much prior knowledge they have on mental health conditions, what their perceptions are on seeking treatment, and how much of their views are influenced by depictions of mental illness in popular media. Speak about your direct personal experience, using "I" statements. This will help your loved one understand the importance of the conversation.

It is helpful to know what you are asking before the conversation starts. Figure out if you want more emotional support, someone just to listen, or help financially covering treatment.

Above all, be authentic and vulnerable. Try not to get frustrated if your loved ones don't understand what you are going through at first. Sometimes it takes several conversations before it clicks but continuing to be open and honest helps build that supportive relationship.

*Response Provided By Sound Mind Live*

If you are feeling off or "different," it exhibits strength to reach out to a trusted resource. You do not have to struggle alone. If you're uncomfortable or unfamiliar with this topic, look [here](#) for tips about how to speak with others and language you can use. Consider contacting a [Warmline](#) - a resource that allows you to talk and get support if your other circle of supports are unavailable. [MusiCares Health and Human Service team](#) is available to provide community resources, industry-specific referrals and facilitate requests for financial assistance if a lack of funds is an obstacle to seeking treatment. All information provided to MusiCares staff is kept strictly confidential.

We are seeing a sustained uptick around the topic of mental health and emotional wellness in the music industry. Let's keep the momentum going and debunk the stigma. In addition to the wonderful organizations represented here, [Behind the Scenes](#) provides assistance to technology industry professionals and has a host of information specific to the entertainment industry. Check out [NAMI](#) for specific community resources that might speak to your cultural background. MusiCares has also partnered with [Togetherall](#), online community for shared experiences and support.

*Response Provided By MusiCares*

## 6. My mental health is impacting my ability to be creative, what can I do?

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Research shows that creative activities actually positively impact mental health. If you are struggling with something like songwriting for your career, try taking a step back and just playing music for fun. Or try another medium for creativity like art or dance. Taking the pressure off creating and just doing it for fun with no stakes can not only help your mental health, it may trigger other ideas you can take back to songwriting or whatever your main mode of creation is.

*Response Provided By Sound Mind Live*

Trust that your creativity isn't going anywhere and that it's ok to take some time to address your mental health. Ignoring your mental health will not make things better and it is completely natural to go through phases where you feel blocked. The sooner you work on addressing your mental health needs the sooner you will learn the tools to bring yourself back to your creative expression.

*Response Provided By Backline*

## 7. How can I deal with external pressures?

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We all deal with pressure, especially at work. Sometimes pressure is a good thing - it pushes us to perform better and maximizes our talents. However, too much pressure can lead to burnout or worse. Break large tasks down into smaller, more manageable pieces. Things like exercise and meditation will help calm your mind and also boost your energy levels making pressure more manageable to deal with.

*Response Provided By Sound Mind Live*

## 8. How can I help myself and others set healthy boundaries?

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Setting healthy boundaries requires self-awareness and good communication skills. We need to be clear about our expectations of ourselves and others, and what we are and are not comfortable with in specific situations. When setting a boundary with someone else, it is best to be clear and assertive but not aggressive. You'll want to be as straightforward as possible and state your need or request in terms of what you'd like to see happen instead of what you don't like. Sometimes this may cause discomfort between you and the other person, but you have to be okay with those feelings and stand firm in your decision. Healthy boundaries in the long-run create trust and build strong relationships. They also allow for you to take care of you by making yourself a priority.

*Response Provided By Sound Mind Live*

## 9. I sometimes worry that drugs and alcohol are affecting my mental health. How can I avoid substances while remaining engaged on the road?

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It can be difficult to do this alone. Having someone to talk to (i.e. a sponsor, a trusted friend, a crisis hotline, a professional clinician) is important to help you work through difficult decisions and hold you accountable to your intentions while on the road. The buddy system within a band can help, or at the very least have an exit strategy for when a situation becomes too much for you to remain comfortable. Focus on engaging with your team during the day and engage by leading by example; remind them that being on the road is a job and encourage them to join you in your healthy habits.

*Response Provided By Backline*

## 10. How can I create more separation between my personal self and my public image?

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In this digital age, it is important for artists to connect with fans outside of shows via digital platforms like social media. However, too much time spent on social media can make you feel like your public image is encroaching on your personal self. Try to set healthy social media boundaries and limit your time on the apps. Use this time instead to connect with people in your personal life who know the real you rather than your public image. Additionally, find activities and hobbies that you personally enjoy that aren't related to your public image and resist sharing those things on social media or in a public forum.

*Response Provided By Sound Mind Live*



FOR THOSE  
WHO  
SUPPORT  
ARTISTS



## 1. How can I spot the signs of someone who is struggling with their mental health?

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There are some general signs you can look out for that indicate someone in your life may be struggling with their mental health:

- Impulsive behaviors or being more irritated than usual
- Not functioning like their usual selves (i.e., change in habits of how they dress, general appearance, eating or sleep habits)
- Talking about feelings of loneliness or despair
- Excessive worry
- Trouble concentrating
- Substance misuse
- Self-isolation

*Response Provided By Sound Mind Live*

When reaching out for help, we know that for many, it doesn't come easily. Take a moment to observe your friends and colleagues and check-in with the individual. Have you noticed any changes in their behavior or overall presentation? Let them know you're available to lend an ear or directly state you're concerned and make it clear they do not need to deal with their struggle alone. Letting someone know they feel heard makes a significant impact.

*Response Provided By MusiCares*

Connecting with yourself and how you're feeling on a daily basis will help ground you and increase your intuition. It will also allow you to be more in tune with others. When you are grounded and in tune with your own needs you are to hold space for what others need.

*Response Provided By Backline*

## 2. What do I do if I notice someone I support is having issues with substance abuse?

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The best thing for you to do is have an open and honest conversation with them. Express concern for their wellbeing and describe the reasons for your concern. Listen to what they have to say and acknowledge their feelings on the subject. Offer to help them connect into treatment and resources and let them know they are not alone. If you or someone you support needs help with substance abuse, you can call the SAMHSA hotline at 1800-622-HELP for free and confidential information and treatment referral.

*Response Provided By Sound Mind Live*

## 3. How can I be an advocate for safer mental health practices?

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- Bring healthier mental wellness practices into the workplace.
- Make your own self-care and wellness a priority – model for others around you.
- Lead by example. Share ideas and brainstorm with others in order to spread messaging and highlight the importance of mental health.
- Utilize appropriate language when discussing mental health and educate others on how to do so as well
- Incorporate language about emotional wellness and mental health in regular meetings, before heading out on tour, when signing on new artists or speaking with crew/production staff. This sends a message that everyone -- from the business executive to the manager to the artist to the crew member has a responsibility to ensure mental health and wellness is as important as business issues.

*Response Provided By MusiCares*

## 4. How can I prioritize wellbeing over productivity?

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The fact is, taking care of your wellbeing is key to productivity. The artist you are working with can't give 100% if their personal battery is at 0. Take time to periodically check in with the artist you are working with and ask about their general mood, how they are coping with current stressors, and if they need any support.

*Response Provided By Sound Mind Live*

You cannot sustain productivity without wellbeing so we find a way to intermesh them. Something as simple as closing your eyes and taking 3, full, slow deep breaths is a powerful start. It's free, you can do it anywhere and it takes seconds.

*Response Provided By CoMuse*

As they say on airplanes, if you want to help others around you, you must put your mask on first - this is known as the Oxygen Mask Principle. We prioritize what matters, so once you believe your well-being is an important part of remaining productive, you will make the time.

*Response Provided By Backline*

## 5. Is there a community I can join to learn more about this topic?

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Check your local NAMI chapter and see if they offer family and friends support groups - oftentimes they do. You can also get engaged online by following mental health social media accounts like @namicommunicate, @afspnational, and @soundmind\_live.

*Response Provided By Sound Mind Live*

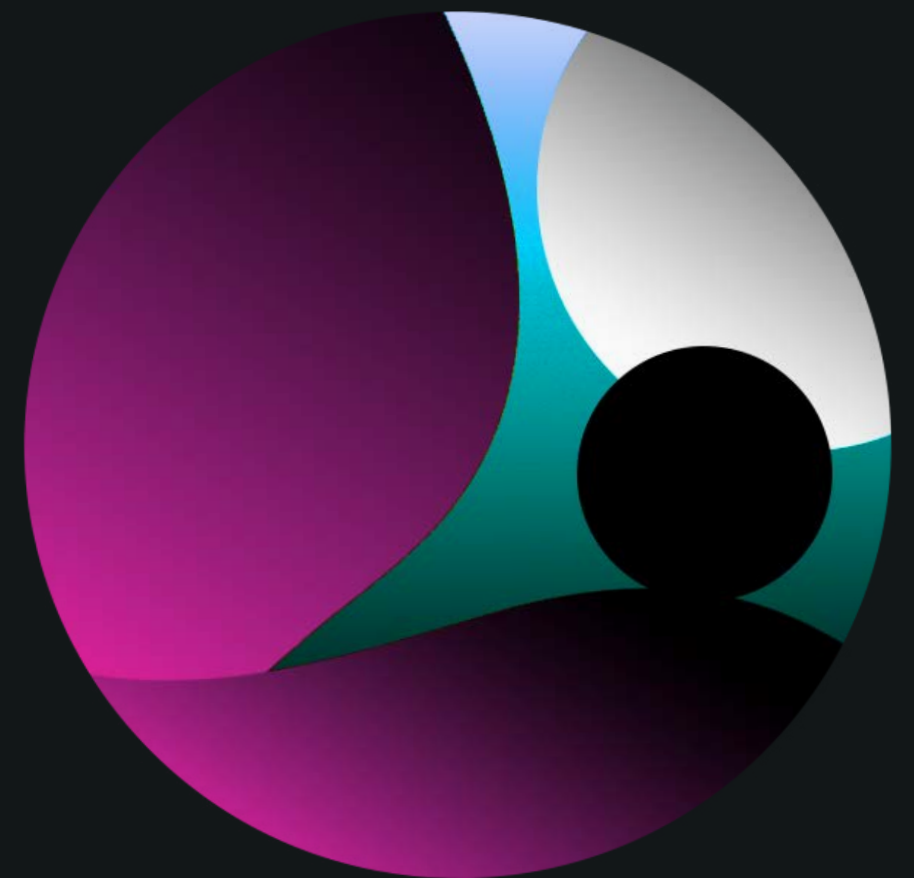
There are so many wonderful communities available! You can look to see if you have a local chapter in your city or town that you can join. Our amazing community CoMuse brings industry professionals together online and in person in a unique learning community setting to create safe spaces in being more mindful in our career approaches and in our relationships with others. We focus on the practical applications of compassion at work. Also huge shout outs to shesaid.so, thisisequilibrium.com, womeninmusic.org, MusiCares, backline.care and The Orchard for all the work they're doing to continuously provide support resources for their beautiful communities as well.

*Response Provided By CoMuse*

The team at Backline is dedicated to helping music industry professionals learn better mental health practices and implement healthier routines into their daily life, on and off the road. You can join their [free weekly support groups](#) ranging in topics from grief/loss to partner/relationship support to overall wellness.

*Response Provided By Backline*

# LEARN ABOUT OUR PARTNERS





## MusiCares



MusiCares helps the humans behind music because music gives so much to the world. Offering preventive, emergency, and recovery programs, MusiCares is a safety net supporting the health and welfare of the music community. Founded by the Recording Academy in 1989 as a U.S. based, independent 501(c)(3) charity, MusiCares safeguards the well-being of all music people through direct financial grant programs, networks of support resources, and tailored crisis relief efforts. For more information please visit: [www.musicares.org](http://www.musicares.org)

## CoMuse



Here at CoMuse, we believe that working smarter means showing up for everyone in mindful ways in order to redefine success at every level. Studies show that mindfulness practices benefit us even more when our intention is tied to value-based actions like the “why” (Psychology Today), providing meaning and purpose, peace and creativity, far beyond the paycheck.

We serve the Music + Tech Community by offering year-round support in business coaching, mindful community, industry master classes, mindfulness sessions, articles, networking and other consistent support resources to cultivate more inclusive, empathetic, integrated places for you to do your best work.

### **We provide:**

- Year-round business coaching (different from therapy! Can be even more effective than mentorship!)
- Monthly master classes
- Weekly mindfulness sessions
- CoMuse members newsletter to support ongoing engagement
- Industry POV (point of view) articles from all sectors of industry
- Industry networking
- Mindful community chat/video boards moderated by CoMuse and CoMuse thought leaders and partners

## Sound Mind Live



Sound Mind is based on the premise that collectively our voices are stronger, and that by amplifying artists who are speaking openly about their mental health, we can elevate the conversation and build a community and culture that breaks the stigma that exists today.

### **Our Pillars:**

**Build community & empathy** by elevating the stories of artists speaking out about mental health

**Help those with mental health issues** by raising awareness & funding for critical mental health services

**Inspire action for change** by encouraging our audience to reach out to loved ones, or seek mental health services themselves

## Backline



Backline is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that connects music industry professionals and their families with mental health and wellness resources. We want to build a safer and more supportive music industry by helping our community access quality mental health care providers that understand this line of work.

### **What We Do:**

#### **Case Management**

Work one-on-one with a Backline Case Manager to create a mental health plan specifically catered to your needs, location, and financial resources.

#### **Support Groups**

Connect with a community of music industry professionals around the world. Led by licensed mental health providers, Backline support groups meet online, and provide a safe space to come together to share your experiences.

#### **Mental Health & Wellness Resources**

Take advantage of free wellness subscriptions, curated content, and exclusive discounts to support your journey—on and off the road.



FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT US  
AT [THEORCHARD.COM](http://THEORCHARD.COM)

