

National survey seeks musicians input on mental health and substance misuse challenges

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New Orleans musician Anders Osborne, left, and Tulane School of Social Work Dean Patrick Bordnick are teaming up on a nationwide survey that aims to help musicians deal with substance misuse issues. (Photo courtesy of Patrick Bordnick)

The [Tulane University of School of Social Work](#) is partnering with the nonprofit [Send Me A Friend](#) in a nationwide survey aimed at examining the behavioral health challenges of musicians.

The goal of the survey is to collect data that will inform and demonstrate the need for increased behavioral health support and interventions to support musicians.

The idea stems from discussions with Patrick Bordnick, PhD, dean of the School of Social Work; New Orleans musician Anders Osborne, a co-founder of Send Me A Friend; Bill Taylor, director of Send Me A Friend; and Tonya Hansel, PhD, director of the social work school's doctorate program. Other behavioral health clinicians, musicians and industry experts also offered input into the ways performers experience and manage their lifestyles.

Founded in 2016, Send Me A Friend, is a support network of "sober friends" who are on call to attend a show and offer a helping hand and source of support for newly-sober musicians and music industry professionals.

"We've worked with and have tragically lost so many musicians who have struggled with substance abuse, anxiety, depression and many other issues," Taylor said. "While some support systems exist, more could definitely be made available.

"Being sober can be particularly challenging as a touring musician, and we want to pay close attention into exactly what that looks like and how to best address and support those who need the help," Taylor said.

The [survey](#) asks 30 questions dealing with the lifestyle challenges that musicians and others in the industry face on a regular basis. It is anonymous, and professional/touring musicians can provide their input at musiciansurvey.org through June 2020.

"The survey has been well-vetted, done with musician input and employs best practices and ethical considerations," Bordnick said. "Our hope is that we can use the information to create inclusivity for all people making music or attending performances, regardless of their recovery status or behavioral health challenges.

Bordnick has 20 years of experience in clinical and laboratory research on addiction, giving him the ability to translate this knowledge into convenient, common-sense interventions. Osborne, who has been sober for about 11 years, said it is that kind of background that persuaded him to partner with Bordnick and the Tulane School of Social Work.

"We (Send Me A Friend) realized that we were operating a little bit in the dark when it came down to further help with recovery and mental health issues in the music industry," Osborne said. "Teaming up with Dean Patrick Bordnick will enable us to gain world-class expertise in putting together a comprehensive study to get the

exact data we need. The sheer volume of knowledge will be invaluable and influential when implementing actual boots on the ground help around the country.”

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Patrick Bordnick, dean of the Tulane School of Social Work