Fake Pills and Fentanyl
Closing the Knowledge Gap to Reduce Youth Risk

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Song for Charlie
An Unexpected Result

Illicit Substance Use
U.S. 8th, 10th, 12th Graders

Drug-induced Mortality
U.S. Teens age 14-18

*excludes marijuana

1 University of Michigan (2022)  2 CDC (2022)
Objectives

- Recognize the **synthetic drug landscape** transition & impact on youth
- Understand the findings from Song for Charlie’s **youth fentanyl survey research**
- Identify **misperception of harm** among young Americans, leading to increased risk
- Examine the important role that **targeted awareness campaigns** have in reducing this risk
- Obtain **resources** available to raise awareness and identify opportunities for use in practice

**NOTE:** For purposes of this presentation and readability, any reference to “fentanyl” broadly applies to the category of drugs termed “synthetic opioid analgesics other than methadone, including drugs such as fentanyl and tramadol (MCD: T40.4). There is no systemic determination of illicit fentanyl-involved deaths vs. those involving pharmaceutical grade fentanyl; mortality and other discussion in the public square is generally described as ‘primarily fentanyl and its analogs and primarily illicit’. Many deaths involve multiple substances; unless otherwise noted, fentanyl-involved deaths represents any death with reported MCD T40.4, regardless of other substances involved.
Farm-to-Lab Synthetics

Deception/The Unexpected

AUTHENTIC
oxycodone M30 tablets

*FAKE
oxycodone M30 tablets containing fentanyl

3 DEA (2022)
Youth are Disproportionately Impacted

Growth in Drug-induced Death²
2021 vs. 2018

- 14-18: +152%
- 19-23: +59%
- All Ages: +57%

% Fentanyl-involvement in Drug-induced Death²
2021

- 14-18:
  - Fentanyl only: 77%
  - Fentanyl +: 24%
- 19-23:
  - Fentanyl only: 80%
  - Fentanyl +: 39%
- All Ages:
  - Fentanyl only: 66%
  - Fentanyl +: 43%
  - Other: 23%

² CDC (2022)
Youth Survey Research

• Commissioned by Song for Charlie and executed by Breakwater Strategy online August 2022

• In addition to questions on fentanyl & counterfeit pill knowledge, questions were asked on mental health, substance use motivations, peer perceptions, & social media. (backup)

• Nationwide sample of 1,500 Young Americans aged 13-24; n=612 Teens (13-17) and n=888 Young Adults (18-24)

• Margin of error of plus or minus 2.5 percentage points at the 95% confidence level

• Quotas and weights were used to ensure age cohort national demographic representation

• “Aware”, “Knowledgeable”, & “Dangerous” refer to responses of 7+ out of 10

• Comparisons to 2021 are based on data from “Research on Dangers of Counterfeit Drugs Among Teens and Young Adults” commissioned by Snap Inc. & executed by Morning Consult, 10.2021


4 Song for Charlie (2022)
The Knowledge Gap

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Teens (13-17)</th>
<th>Young Adults (18-24)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aware of fentanyl in fake pills</td>
<td>2021 27%</td>
<td>2022 36%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2022 56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledgeable about fentanyl generally</td>
<td>2021 20%</td>
<td>2022 39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2022 47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure of fentanyl danger</td>
<td>2021 35%</td>
<td>2022 15%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>2022 11%</td>
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Q: How Dangerous is it?⁴ - A Misperception of Harm

**Teens (13-17)**

- Cocaine: 80%
- Heroin: 79%
- Rx Opioids: 61%
- *Fentanyl*: 58%
- Cigarettes: 54%
- Benzos: 47%
- Stimulants: 43%
- Marijuana: 37%

**Young Adults (18-24)**

- Heroin: 87%
- Cocaine: 81%
- *Fentanyl*: 76%
- Rx Opioids: 73%
- Benzos: 59%
- Cigarettes: 51%
- Stimulants: 48%
- Marijuana: 23%

*12x more fentanyl-involved deaths than cocaine in 2021 for this age group²

*15x more fentanyl-involved deaths than heroin in 2021 for this age group²

⁴ Song for Charlie (2022) ² CDC (2022)
Convert a Risk Factor into a Protective Factor

- “Historically, an individual’s perception of the risks associated with substance use has been an important determinant of whether he or she engages in substance use. For example, youths who perceive high risk of harm are less likely to use drugs than youths who perceive low risk of harm.”

- “Providing young adults with credible, accurate, and relevant information about the harm associated with substance use is a key component in prevention programming.”

- “Young Adults are least concerned about the consequences of prescription drug misuse. They believe that these substances are generally used for legitimate purposes, and thus are not as harmful as other substances.”

Less Likely to Consider Misusing Prescription Drugs after Receiving Targeted Information About Fentanyl & Counterfeit Pills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Teens (13-17)</th>
<th>Young Adults (18-24)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>69%</td>
<td>62%</td>
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</table>

“Those who know the dangers of fentanyl are significantly less likely to consider misusing Rx drugs in the future”

Raise Awareness Fast...

- Primary prevention resources lag the synthetic shift
- Must reach the universal population at least down to middle school
- Fentanyl & counterfeit knowledge critical (+ signs of an OD, Naloxone)

CDC (12.15.2022): “Urgent efforts to prevent overdose deaths among adolescents are needed and include...educating about dangers of IMFs and counterfeit pills.”

9 Tanz (2022)
Resources

Song for Charlie

• [http://www.songforcharlie.org](http://www.songforcharlie.org)
• **Impact Videos & PSAs**
• **Posters/Flyers/Soc. Media Assets**
• **Middle School/High School Toolkit**
• **College Toolkit**
• **Facts about Fentanyl**
• **Current Data**
• Find us @Song for Charlie on: Snap, FB, Insta, TikTok, YouTube, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn

Other Resources

• [CADCA: Practical Theorist on Fentanyl](https://www.cadca.org)
• [U.S. Dept of Ed: Knowing the Facts About Fentanyl](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ode/odp/resources/fentanyl.html)
• [U.S. Dept of Ed: Preventing and Addressing Fentanyl Use](https://www2.ed.gov/programs/ncate/fentanyl.html)
• [Ad Council: Drop the F Bomb](https://www.adcouncil.org/
• [Ad Council: Real Deal on Fentanyl](https://www.adcouncil.org/
• [Ad Council: PSA’s/Assets](https://www.adcouncil.org/
• [DEA: One Pill Can Kill](https://www.dea.gov/
• [CDC: Stop Overdose](https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/index.html)
• [Arizona SACLAZ: Fentanyl Toolkit](https://www.saclaz.org)
• [King County, WA: Talk Even If](https://www.kingcounty.gov)
• [King County, WA: Laced & Lethal](https://www.kingcounty.gov)
• [Connecticut Prevention: You Think You Know](https://www.ct.gov)
• [Oregon/Idaho HIDTA: Community Threat Bulletin](https://www.idaho.gov)
• [Oregon Health Authority: School Toolkit](https://www.ohsu.edu)
• [Beaverton S.D.: Fake & Fatal](https://www.beaverton.k12.or.us)
Thank You!

realtalk@songforcharlie.org

2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. National Vital Statistics System, Mortality 1999-2020 and Provisional Mortality on CDC WONDER Online Database. Data are from the Multiple Cause of Death Files, 1999-2020 and from provisional data for years 2021-2022, as compiled from data provided by the 57 vital statistics jurisdictions through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program. Accessed at http://wonder.cdc.gov/mcd-icd10.html & http://wonder.cdc.gov/mcd-icd10-provisional.html in Oct, 2022 * NCHS has defined selected causes of death groups for analysis of all ages mortality data. “Drug poisoning (overdose)” deaths are identified by the ICD if any one of the following ICD-10 codes, indicating poisoning by drugs, medicaments, and biological substances, is in the underlying cause of death: X40–X44 (unintentional), X60–X64 (suicide), X85 (assault), and Y10–Y14 (undetermined intent). ICD-10 allows for the identification of specific drug classes in overdoses by the ICD-10 codes T36–T50, “Poisoning by drugs, medicaments, and biological substances.” Drug overdose & poisoning deaths involving selected drug categories are identified by specific multiple cause-of-death codes: heroin (T40.1); natural opioid analgesics, including morphine and codeine, and semisynthetic opioids, including drugs such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, hydromorphone, and oxymorphone (T40.2); methadone, a synthetic opioid (T40.3); synthetic opioid analgesics other than methadone, including drugs such as fentanyl and tramadol (T40.4); cocaine (T40.5); Benzodiazepines (T42.4), and psychostimulants with abuse potential, which includes methamphetamine (T43.6). “Fentanyl-involvement” is (MCD T40.4/All drug overdose deaths). “Fentanyl-only” uses (Any T40.4) minus (Any T40.4 + any involvement of T40.1 and/or T40.2 and/or T40.3, and/or T40.5, and/or T42.4 and/or T43.6). “Fentanyl +” is total drug deaths minus Fentanyl-only deaths. Multiple drugs may be involved in one drug death. Death rates, where used, are per 100K population and growth uses death rate per 100K population and growth.


5. Song for Charlie (2022, November 2). Key Findings from Research on Dangers of Counterfeit Drugs and Fentanyl among Teens and Young Adults (10.2022). Retrieved November 10, 2022, from https://89faea1f4bca-418b-930f-c1d2a3e99c7d.usfiles.com/ugd/89faea_974648e12a1140dd96bafbe1d88b4b5c.pdf


“Warn the Kids” Research – Key Findings

- 4 out of 5 young Americans say people their age feel overwhelmed
- Common stressors for young Americans include academics, social concerns, finances, and their future. Coping with stress & anxiety is a leading reason for young Americans to misuse prescription medication
- 16% of young Americans have misused prescription medicine, 22% have thought about it, and 20% say they are likely to or are unsure about misusing prescription medication in the future
- 89% of young Americans feel that misusing prescription medicine is ‘risky’, but only 68% consider taking Rx opioids off script as ‘dangerous’ (even less for benzos (eg Xanax) and stimulants (eg Adderall))
- Less than half (48%) of young Americans – including just more than a third (36%) of teens – are aware that fentanyl is being used to create counterfeit pills
- Only 2 in 5 young Americans consider themselves knowledgeable about fentanyl. 68% consider fentanyl to be dangerous, far less than heroin (84%) and cocaine (81%) even though fentanyl is involved in 17x more deaths than heroin and 5x more than cocaine. Nearly 20% of young Americans don’t know enough about fentanyl to rate its danger.
- After reviewing targeted information about fentanyl in fake pills, 65% of young are Americans less likely to consider misusing Rx drugs
- Those who know the dangers of fentanyl are significantly less likely to consider misusing Rx drugs in the future
“Typical” Gen Z (Age 13-24)

Gen Z says...

- We are overwhelmed: 79%
- I am stressed: 42%
- Mental health is stigmatized: 69%
  - Top stressors: Academics, social, financial, future
  - Top reasons to misuse Rx: Party, coping, image...experiment

Prescription medication ‘off script’

- Easy to get: 45%
- My peers have used: 60%
- My friends have used: 45%

- 16% of Gen Z have misused prescription medicine; studies show Rx misuse is 5-10x higher than heroin or cocaine by this age group*
- 20% of Gen Z say they are likely to or are unsure if they might in the future

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*Footnote: According to a study conducted by the SAMHSA, in 2021, 16% of high school seniors reported using prescription painkillers within the past month. This percentage is higher than the national average and highlights the need for increased awareness and prevention measures among this age group.
Where and How to “Warn the Kids”

Seen PSA/Ads on Social Media:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Teens</th>
<th>Young Adults</th>
<th>Gen Z</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youtube</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>TikTok</td>
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<td>Facebook</td>
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<td>Twitter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Snapchat</td>
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Seen on:

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<th>Platform</th>
<th>Teens</th>
<th>Young Adults</th>
<th>Gen Z</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Media News</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local News</td>
<td></td>
<td>43%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National News</td>
<td></td>
<td>42%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td></td>
<td>39%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family &amp; Friends (SM)</td>
<td></td>
<td>32%</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

General Awareness from:

- Social Media News: 55%
- Local News: 43%
- National News: 42%
- School: 39%
- Family & Friends (SM): 32%

Receptivity

- Social Media influencers: 64%
- Social Media PSA: 60%
- Campus: 58%
- Articles: 57%
- MS/HS: 54%
- Law Enforcement: 52%

Trust

- Healthcare Provider: 75%
- School/College: 64%
- Law Enforcement: 61%
- Social Media Platforms: 57%
- Non Profit: 53%

Song for Charlie (2022, November 2). Key Findings from Research on Dangers of Counterfeit Drugs and Fentanyl among Teens and Young Adults (10.2022). Retrieved November 10, 2022, from https://89faea1f-4bca418b-930f-c1d2a3e99c7d.usrfiles.com/ugd/89faea_974648e12a1140dd96bafbe1d8bb4f5c.pdf
What is Preventable?

U.S. Youth Leading Causes of Death by Intent & Mechanism
Age 14-23 (accident = unintentional & undetermined)


Accident Motor Vehicle, 15.5
Accident Poisoning, 13.6
Homicide Firearm, 13.3
Suicide Firearm, 7.6
Suicide Suffocation, 4
Non Injury Cancer, 1
Non Injury Influenza/COVID, 2.8
Non Injury Heart, 1.9
Suicide Poisoning, 1.2
Accident Drowning, 1.1


Song for Charlie (2022, October). Presentation Slides for Mortality Data Through 2021 (10.2022). Retrieved December 16, 2022, from https://934d8a19-1c0b-4044-bcd5-5c772a63a94c.usrfiles.com/ugd/89faea_c5e19a3fa0216a08c6046d448fa19a3.pdf
A New Landscape

U.S. Youth Drug-induced Death Rate by Drug Type-involvement
Age 14-23

All youth drug death
6K, +70% vs 2018
1.1K teens, 4.9K young adults

Fentanyl/
Synthetic Opioids
4.8K, +141% vs. 2018

Meth
Benzos
Cocaine

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