



**EDUCATOR TOOLKIT**

# **THE FIRST DAY**

**A FOCUS ON THE BEGINNING**

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“The focus oftentimes is about the worst day when it comes to speaking about addiction and not the first day. Kids need to understand how this begins rather than how it ends. Prevention starts on the first day.”

~ CHRIS HERREN, *THE FIRST DAY* ~

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Your students are about to see an important film. We hope Chris Herren’s story will help start an important conversation between students and the adults who care for them about what might lead young people to engage in substance use as well as what can be done to help prevent such use and the possible escalation to addiction. For some of your students who already may be struggling with substance use disorder (with or without realizing it), *The First Day* is a step to help guide them toward understanding that help is available and toward reducing the stigma around seeking help from the supportive peers and adults in their lives.

Wherever your students are individually regarding substance use, we thank you for bringing *The First Day* to your classroom or school. This Educator Toolkit provides information and resources to help you prepare your students for a screening of *The First Day* and support materials to implement following the film. Given the sensitive nature of this topic, thoughtful preparation prior to the screening, and having immediate and longer-term strategies in place post-screening, are critical. This toolkit will assist you in carrying out those tasks and serve as a springboard to strengthen mental health services and a culture of wellness throughout your school community.

# ABOUT THE FILM

Chris Herren was a high school All-American basketball legend from Fall River, Massachusetts. He was living every high school athlete's dream come true on the outside, but the overwhelming pressure and expectations that come with small town fame was a heavy burden on his inner world. Like so many teenagers, Chris turned to alcohol to cope with intense emotions.

In college, alcohol use led to drug use and the disease of substance use disorder (SUD) began to dictate more and more of Chris' choices and actions. He continued to lead a double-life of basketball stardom alongside his growing battle with SUD. Although Chris' dependency on drugs had taken firm control over his life, he nevertheless continued to excel at the highest levels of basketball, and was even drafted into the NBA, where he played for the Denver Nuggets and his hometown Boston Celtics. But the grip of SUD can be overpowering and ultimately the disease brought Chris' basketball career tumbling down. Thus began his long, hard journey towards recovery.

The story of Chris' rise and fall was told in the ESPN Films 30 for 30 documentary, *Unguarded*. The film exceeded all expectations, starting as a network sports documentary to a film that today can be found incorporated into health education curricula and rehabilitation centers nationwide. *Unguarded* has helped thousands of people and continues to provide hope to many more.

Since 2009, Chris Herren has shared his story of recovery from the disease of addiction with over one million teens across the country. *The First Day* documents Chris' presentation so that millions more students might benefit from his story. This second documentary about Chris captures his powerful gift for storytelling. By honestly sharing his own vulnerabilities and the hard lessons he has learned, he makes profound connections with high school students who, in turn, have shared their stories of struggle and strength.

Through the power of storytelling, *The First Day* addresses some of the most difficult issues facing teens today, offering all of us the opportunity to deepen our understanding and sense of compassion for individuals struggling with substance use disorder and bringing greater awareness to the ever-evolving challenges facing young people today on their journey to adulthood.

With substance misuse and addiction being one of the critical public health problems of our time, there is an urgency to address the epidemic, but it is a solvable problem. We can, and must, inspire and catalyze action on this crisis. Listening to and learning from Chris Herren and the stories told in the *The First Day* is an effective and powerful step towards this goal.

# PREPARING STUDENTS TO WATCH THE FIRST DAY

- ➔ Prepare Teachers
- ➔ Communicate with Families
- ➔ Support Trauma Informed School Communities

## A NOTE TO TEACHERS

Although the main purpose of this toolkit is to help you prepare to watch and learn from *The First Day* with your students, it is important to acknowledge that the film may trigger painful memories and emotions from your own life experiences. Just like your students, the film might also push you to confront--in ways you may not have previously--current choices you make regarding substance use.

With this in mind, we recommend you view the full film, read through the information in this guide, and do some personal reflection/journaling using the discussion and journal prompts that follow in this toolkit before bringing it to your students. Chris Herren's story is emotional. It is important for you to be aware of your own triggers and feelings and have the time to process them so you are not dealing with your own raw emotions while trying to facilitate your students' learning.

## COMMUNICATE WITH FAMILIES: A LETTER TO PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

Open communication between school and home is critical for strengthening school communities, fostering a culture of healthy relationships, and nurturing school communities that support a trauma-informed approach to students' education and health. To support these goals, a sample letter/email is included in the Toolkit that can be adapted to meet your community's needs and to ensure that parents and guardians are informed and able to participate in this critical conversation.

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--in ways you may not have previously--  
current choices you make regarding  
substance use.



## Sample letter

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Our school is scheduled to watch the documentary film *The First Day* on \_\_\_\_\_.

We are sending this communication home to inform you of this special screening and invite parents and guardians to participate in the conversation at home. The film is about Chris Herren, a high school All-American basketball star from Fall River, Massachusetts who went onto a career in the NBA with the Denver Nuggets and the Boston Celtics. As a high school student, he was living every high school athlete's dream on the outside, but the overwhelming pressure and expectations that come with small town fame was a heavy burden on his inner world.

Like so many teenagers, Chris turned to alcohol to cope with his intense emotions. Alcohol use led to other substances, and eventually, to a substance use disorder. Addiction ultimately ended his career.

*The First Day* is the second documentary about Chris. The first documentary *Unguarded* aired on ESPN in 2011 and captures Chris's story and how he attained recovery. This new film *The First Day* focuses on what Chris learned on his journey of recovery since he committed himself to sharing his story with young people. After more than ten years of speaking in schools across the country, Chris has come to believe that it is more important to share with students what leads to the first day of substance use rather than to focus on the last days of addiction. In doing so, he believes students can begin to learn to cope with their own stressors and pressures in healthier ways, be more compassionate to their peers who may be struggling, and understand that help is available to those who need it. The film captures his powerful gift for storytelling. By honestly sharing his own vulnerabilities and the hard lessons he has learned, he makes profound connections with students who, in turn, have shared their stories of struggle and strength.

After seeing the film, your son or daughter may have questions or simply want to talk about how he or she experienced the film.

That is where your role as a parent or caregiver is especially important. To help you make the most of this opportunity to connect with your child in an effective way about this important topic, the **Partnership for Drug-Free Kids**, **Center on Addiction**, and **Herren Project** are national organizations with programs to support families working to prevent or respond to substance use. These organizations have many resources that can be accessed for free to help you learn more about youth substance use and the risks for addiction, how to have positive and productive conversations with your son or daughter about these issues, and how to get support and help if you are already worried about your child's substance use behaviors or addiction.

Partnership for Drug-Free Kids: <https://drugfree.org/>

- **Helpful BLOG POSTS for parents and caregivers** from Partnership for Drug-Free Kids
- **Parent Helpline** – connects parents and caregivers directly with a trained and caring specialist ready to listen and help families find answers, with support available in English and Spanish.

- **Help & Hope by Text** – provides customized mobile messages with personalized, ongoing support and relevant resources on how to best help a child either experimenting or struggling with drug or alcohol use – all sent via text straight to a parent’s or caregiver’s cell phone.
- **Parent Coaching** – pairs parents seeking help for their child’s substance use issues with another specially trained parent volunteer who has also traveled the path of dealing with a child’s substance use and addiction.
- A **Drug Guide for Parents** to help inform parents about the substances their teens may be exposed to.
- A **Vaping Guide** to help families learn more about vaping and how to talk with their kids about its risks.
- A **Marijuana Talk Kit**, which helps parents understand why marijuana is risky for teens, and how to talk with their kids and respond to their questions.

Center on Addiction: <https://www.centeronaddiction.org>

Herren Project: <https://herrenproject.org>

If you have any questions or concerns about your child participating in this event, please contact [CONTACT AT SCHOOL].

Sincerely,

#### **TEXT MESSAGE**

On [DATE], our school will watch the film *The First Day*, the first-hand story of a basketball star’s experience with substance use. Visit [SHORT CODE] for information about the film, and how you can support your son or daughter.

PROOF

## **UNDERSTANDING LANGUAGE, LABELS AND STIGMA**

*The First Day* opens a pathway to empathy. The language we use to talk about substance use and addiction can either reinforce or break down the misconceptions and stigma that can stand in the way of preventing it and providing effective care for those affected by it.

Words have enormous power to influence how we see people who struggle with substance use or addiction and how they see themselves. In the field of substance use, as with mental health and disability, there is a strong push to use “person-centered language;” that is, using language that acknowledges the person before their condition, behavior or illness.<sup>1</sup> For example, “addict” minimizes a person to that one aspect of the self, disregarding his or her role as a parent, sibling, musician, spiritual person, etc., and in doing so perpetuates stigma. “Person with addiction” is an example of person-centered language that counts addiction as just one characterizing quality of the whole person.

For additional information please reference the **Addictionary** for proper terminology and language that is unified around substance use disorder.<sup>2</sup>

## **ESTABLISHING A SAFE SCHOOL CULTURE**

First and foremost, school needs to be a supportive environment where all students feel comfortable to reach out for help, receive guidance, and find helpful and relevant resources if there is substance use in their past or currently in their life.

Your students may have varying levels of experience and familiarity with substance use and addiction, whether in relation to themselves, their peers, or their family members. Please be aware that *The First Day* may bring up a myriad of issues with which students are struggling. These can be anything from past traumatic experiences, current physical or sexual abuse, bullying, self-injury and/or suicidal thoughts. It is important that your school develops and communicates a plan prior to any screening on how these delicate issues will be managed.

Schools that screen the film should have a qualified prevention specialist and a mental health professional who is trained in addressing substance use and addiction among youth and is available at the time of the screening and during the discussions that follow so that students and staff can receive appropriate support and referrals to professional care if needed.

Before you watch *The First Day* with your students, ensure that your school and staff have the necessary resources available to support students who may be especially affected by the viewing. This toolkit has outlined support services that must be in place to make sure students are emotionally supported and safe and that school staff can responsibly handle issues that may arise with a school screening.

### **Key Personnel**

As you work on developing a plan for your class or school to watch *The First Day*, you should create a list of the people who will play a role in supporting students if issues arise. Staff with differing areas of expertise will be required to support students and handle any disclosures or crises.



The following people may be helpful in planning and providing support to students:

- Superintendent
- Principal
- Assistant principal
- Curriculum director
- Health educator
- School nurse
- School health coordinator
- Guidance counselor/school counselor
- School social worker
- Members of a crisis response team
- School psychologist
- Child study team member(s)
- School security officer/school resource officer
- Teachers
- School-based health center and/or mental health center staff
- Supportive peers

### **Identification and Intervention**

Even though a student may not have used tobacco, alcohol or drugs, he or she may still have significant risk factors for use, such as use among family members or close friends, mental health or behavioral problems, poor academic performance or other personal issues that require the responsiveness and support of school personnel. Teachers, counselors and administrators are already equipped to work with youth; most are also somewhat knowledgeable of the legal, sociological, psychological and medical effects of substance use or addiction. It should be a goal of your school system, through in-service programs and workshops, to continually raise staff awareness, understanding and effectiveness regarding substance use in order to ensure that students at risk for or already engaging in substance use are receiving the prevention and intervention services they need. The school staff must be alert to those signs and symptoms in students that may indicate substance use so that they may intervene appropriately and effectively. The film's sponsors, Center on Addiction, Partnership for Drug-Free Kids, and Herren Project have very useful and important resources available to help inform educators about these issues.

Start with these resources from Partnership for Drug-Free Kids

**“Look for Warning Signs”**

**“Preventing Teen Drug Use: How to Spot the Early Warning Signs”**

A student engaging in substance use or struggling with a substance use disorder may demonstrate one or more of the following behaviors: abrupt change in mood or attitude; sudden decline in attendance or performance in school; impaired relationships with family or friends; drowsiness or inattention to discussion or surroundings; weight loss; inattention to appearance; unusual flare-ups of temper; stealing; heightened secrecy about actions or possessions; and association with new friends, especially with individuals known to use substances.

### **Suggested Policy for Counseling/Referral**

If it is clear that a student is either using an addictive substance or there are strong indications that such is the case, the appropriate school professional should discuss the situation with the student and, if it would not endanger the child, with the parents or guardians of the student. These discussions should explore the need for a referral to counseling within the school if available or to a qualified healthcare provider outside of the school who would be capable of responding to the student's needs. The school's student support coordinator, guidance counselor and nurse should be consulted when dealing with such cases.

Students may be referred to the key personnel by teachers or by any other school staff member. Students may self-refer because of a problem with substance use. The team should be prepared to assist the student by providing effective interventions or referrals to effective and affordable care within the community. Relationships with providers in the community to whom the school can refer students in need should be well established prior to screening the film.

### **Suggested Policy Guidelines**

The following policy guidelines have been shown to be effective practices to address the issue of substance use disclosure and intervention and should be in place in a school.

1. All staff should be aware of substance use signs and symptoms outlined herein.
2. All staff have an obligation to be knowledgeable about and to cooperate fully in the implementation of your school substance use policies and guidelines.
3. The school principal, deans, and other school leadership shall provide guidance in addressing the issue of substance use and intervention and shall establish and maintain the following support mechanisms required to address the issue within the wider school community:
  - a. Be sure that staff is knowledgeable about the purpose of the school support team, its membership and the process for making referrals to the team.
  - b. Ensure the provision of in-service for staff in each school year concerning the issue of substance use prevention, identification and intervention.
  - c. Establish and maintain linkage with appropriate community-based support agencies and treatment providers that will assist the school in addressing this issue.
  - d. Provide credible and up-to-date information and services to students to reinforce a safe and healthy lifestyle.

### **Sample School Policy for Communicating About Incidents Related to Drug/Alcohol Use**

- All school department personnel are under obligation to report to the principal, headmaster, or other designated administrator any and all incidents or suspected incidents involving the use, possession, or distribution of any drug, alcoholic beverage or weapons by any student or staff, while he/she is under the authority of the school system.
- All school department personnel are to understand that in the event they are subpoenaed to testify in a court of law or other proceeding, they may be obligated to disclose any information pertaining to drug, alcohol and weapons incidents, even if the information was given confidentially.
- All school personnel should comprehend that they are prohibited from "making deals" with students whereby they agree not to notify school administration or law enforcement agencies of known or suspected illegal activities involving drug, alcohol or weapon incidents.
- Trained qualified school counselors need to confer with school leadership (principal, headmaster, or designated administrator) as to what steps to take if a student is suspected of, or who has admitted to being under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

# SCHOOL CHECKLIST PRIOR TO SCREENING

- ✓ School has a clear alcohol and drug policy that students, faculty, staff, and parents are aware of. The policy should clearly indicate how students in need will get help and support.
- ✓ School has established health-based resources, policies and protocols for handling student substance use disclosures.
- ✓ School has provided training and education to all teacher, staff and administrators about student substance use and corresponding policies and protocols.
- ✓ School has identified local counseling and treatment providers and programs for student and parent/guardian referrals that are well vetted and have been identified as following research-based intervention and treatment approaches for youth populations.
- ✓ School has an established crisis intervention team that is equipped to handle student disclosures about substance use and related issues.

PROOF

## A FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

*The First Day* reminds us that deep learning applies to not only facts and figures, equations and memorization. Curricula and teaching materials must speak to the broader needs of the whole student, including intellectual capabilities and social and emotional skills. The powerful, emotionally-charged content of *The First Day* reminds us of the importance of the whole student and to remember all this as we share this film with students.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is the term given to addressing both “Head and Heart” when we educate our youth. The *Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning* (CASEL) defines SEL as “the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.”<sup>3</sup> Research has shown that a focus on SEL leads to increased academic performance, “improved classroom behavior, an increased ability to manage stress and depression, and better attitudes about themselves, others, and school.”<sup>4</sup>

CASEL provides a framework for SEL that is broken into five core competencies:

- **Self-awareness:** Know your strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a “growth mindset.”
- **Self-management:** Effectively manage stress, control impulses, and motivate yourself to set and achieve goals.
- **Social awareness:** Understand the perspectives of others and empathize with them, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures.
- **Relationship skills:** Communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed.
- **Responsible decision-making:** Make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety, and social norms.

SEL is more than simply adding lessons or a separate program within your school or classroom—it represents a systemic approach. To learn more about SEL and the framework for Systemic Social and Emotional Learning, go to [CASEL.org](https://CASEL.org).<sup>5</sup>



## PRE-SCREENING EXERCISES FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

### 1. Watch *Unguarded* or Chris Herren's *Tedx Talk*

The About the Film section of this Educator's Toolkit describes how *The First Day* presents lessons Chris Herren has learned, and the hard work of deep self-reflection he has done as an integral part of his recovery process. Although *The First Day* is a powerful film on its own, it does not retell Chris' story as it was told in the ESPN original documentary film, *Unguarded*. Therefore, it is highly recommended that you watch *Unguarded*, and have your students watch the film as well, prior to your class (or school-wide) viewing of *The First Day*.

If you and/or your students are unable to watch the full film, *Unguarded*, you may want to consider watching Chris' shorter 16-minute **TEDX Talk** he delivered in 2013 at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

### 2. Set norms in preparation for class discussions

Before viewing the film, it is important to acknowledge with your students that, given the personal and sometimes distressing nature of stories Chris tells in the film, it is likely that students watching the film will have strong feelings, conflicting thoughts or feel very personal connections to the content. It is therefore important to create a safe space for students to be in conversation with one another and with school staff about the film.

One effective activity for fostering productive discourse in the classroom is to create a list of norms of behavior--a contract of sorts--which students and school staff will agree to follow when having discussions around the film. The most effective way to create such a list is to do it collectively, rather than having the teacher or other staff member impose his or her ideas on the students regarding what needs to be in place for safe, constructive dialogue.

Before viewing the film, as a group, create a class list of norms. Make sure the list is written down on a poster-sized piece of paper, or captured in a word processing document. It will be important to be able to go over the list of norms prior to each discussion and remind students that, even with an agreed-upon set of norms about confidentiality, some students may share information with others outside of the classroom and to be cognizant of how much personal information to share in public.

Some examples of the types of items students may include on their list of norms include:

1. Approach your classmates and teacher from a place of respect, even if you disagree with their ideas.
2. Disagreements are okay, but if you disagree with someone's idea, make sure you are addressing the idea and not making a personal attack.
3. Sharing private information will be confidential, not to be repeated without permission from the person who shared it.
4. Don't interrupt someone who is making a point.
5. Try to pay attention to your own voice in the room--are you dominating the conversation? Are you being too quiet?


Note to Educators: The class set of norms is also an opportunity to observe who is participating, and who appears to be more withdrawn in this process. It is important to take note of these behaviors and check-in with students who may be unusually quiet as they, themselves, may be struggling.

### 3. Discuss self-disclosure

In the film, Chris Herren makes several references to students who are moved by his story to share very personal things about themselves and their families during or after his school presentation. As a class, consider the following prompts:

1. With whom do you feel safe sharing personal details about your life?
2. If a person does share something, how will we care for their emotional needs and protect their privacy?

As an educator, you may want to share with students that you are a mandatory reporter in cases where students reveal that they have been threatened, or may be a threat to themselves or others, so that students can make an informed decision about whether and when to share with you. Couple this with specific professional resources to whom students can reach out for support and help with a personal problem. Encourage students seeking more support to turn to organizations such as the Herren Project, Center on Addiction and Partnership for Drug-Free Kids.

A photograph of Chris Herren, a man in a dark jacket, speaking to a large crowd of people in a gymnasium. He is gesturing with his right hand while holding a microphone in his left. The background is filled with a blurred audience of students and adults.

The focus oftentimes is about the worst day when it comes to speaking about addiction and not the first day. Kids need to understand how this begins rather than how it ends. Prevention starts with ALL.

~ CHRIS HERREN ~

## IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE SCREENING

### Discussion and Journaling

Given the sensitive and emotional nature of the content of the film, **it is highly recommended that you make sure to leave some time (at least 10 minutes) immediately after the film ends for journaling and/or discussion, prior to dismissing the class/assembly.**

**Revisit Norms:** In order to facilitate an open dialogue, it may be helpful to revisit the set of norms the students created together; to remind students that disagreements may arise and review guidelines for active listening and respectful conversation.

**Discuss Emotion:** The raw and intimate nature of *The First Day* will likely evoke emotional responses from students in a discussion. As a facilitator, it may be tempting to move past feelings quickly in favor of the more comfortable space of discussing facts, figures and solutions. *Yet, creating space for emotions to surface will help students think more clearly and ground the discussion in the lived experience of everyone in the room, whether they are struggling with decisions related to substance use, the disease of addiction, or supporting a loved one struggling or in recovery.*

One strategy for enabling that emotion is to ask for it. An opening question after the film, such as, “*What is coming up for you?*” will bring some of those feelings forward. Another strategy is to offer paper and pen and allow the viewer time to write down his or her responses to the film before you start discussion, and invite anyone who feels comfortable to share aloud.

### Offer Resources. If it is a life-threatening emergency call 911.

If a student is having a life-threatening emergency, call 911.

If a student is in need of immediate help, refer that student and his or her parents to effective care, whether a local treatment facility, another medical professional, or help them contact the National Crisis Helpline: <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline> or 1-800-662-HELP (4357).<sup>6</sup>

If it is non-urgent, encourage them to reach out to one of the film’s nonprofit partners.

For parents and caregivers concerned about a son’s or daughter’s substance use, Partnership for Drug-Free Kids offers help in the following ways, with support available in English and Spanish:<sup>7</sup>

- **Text a Message to 55753** to begin getting personalized help. Our specialists will get back to you within 24-48 hours with a text message response. To allow our specialists to provide the best help possible, please include as many details as possible in your message.
- **Send an Email** to begin getting personalized help over email. Our specialists will get back to you within 24-48 hours with an emailed response. To allow our specialists to provide the best help possible, please include as many details as possible in your message.

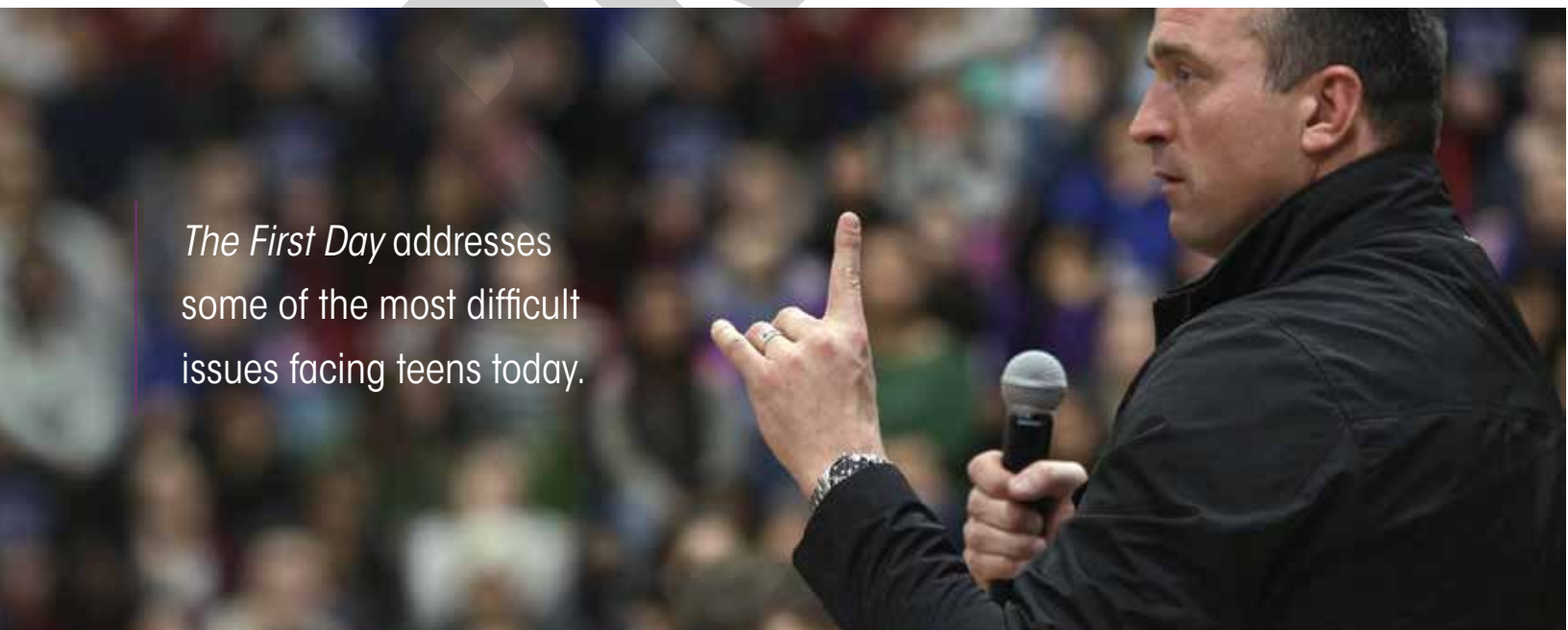
- Call 1-855-378-4373 and speak with one of our specialists to ask questions about the best ways to get help for your son, daughter or another young person in your life.

Note that Partnership for Drug-Free Kids does not offer direct services to people of any age who are experiencing problems with their own substance use; services are directed only at parents and caregivers who are concerned about their child's or a loved one's substance use.

**Here are some sample questions to choose from for a group discussion:**

General:

- What thoughts and emotions came up for you while you watched the film?
- What was one story or scene in *The First Day* that was compelling or difficult?
- What societal pressures and factors did you hear Chris Herren share in the film that contributed to his substance use disorder?
- What are some reasons that you think people your age might use addictive substances like tobacco, alcohol or drugs?
- What do you think prevents people your age who are struggling from seeking help?
- What does it mean to belong? What are the consequences of not belonging?
- Are there substance-free activities that your school or community can provide that might help teens have fun without feeling they need to smoke, drink or use drugs?
- What pressures made Chris Herren's recovery especially difficult?
- What were the events and who were the people in Chris Herren's life that contributed to the turning points in his journey to recovery?

A photograph of a man in a dark jacket speaking into a microphone. He is gesturing with his right hand, pointing upwards. The background is a blurred crowd of people.

*The First Day* addresses some of the most difficult issues facing teens today.



# LESSON PLANS FOR THE CLASSROOM

We recommend that you devote at least four class periods during the days that follow the viewing of *The First Day* to a series of lessons that help students process and understand substance use and addiction.

## **LESSON 1: THE SCIENCE BEHIND SUBSTANCE USE, ADDICTION AND RECOVERY**

This lesson will introduce students to the brain science of addiction, emphasizing how the adolescent brain is especially susceptible to substance use and to developing a substance use disorder.

[https://thefirstdayfilm.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/TFD\\_LessonPlan\\_01.pdf](https://thefirstdayfilm.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/TFD_LessonPlan_01.pdf)

## **LESSON 2: UNDERSTANDING THE STIGMA AROUND ADDICTION**

This lesson will explore misconceptions and stereotypes that exist for addiction and substance use disorder. Students will explore how societal stigma only increases the already daunting challenges of addiction, recovery and life after recovery.

[https://thefirstdayfilm.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/TFD\\_LessonPlan\\_02.pdf](https://thefirstdayfilm.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/TFD_LessonPlan_02.pdf)

## **LESSON 3: WELLNESS PRACTICES FOR LIVING A HEALTHY LIFE**

This lesson will examine the concept of Wellness, which includes tending holistically to one's emotional, physical, spiritual and social health. Students will consider the triggers, pressures and stressors in their lives that present challenges to each of these pillars of health. Students will explore ways to incorporate Wellness Practices into their lives that foster coping skills and strategies to deal with various forms of stress, including social, academic, sports, peer pressure and challenging family situations.

[https://thefirstdayfilm.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/TFD\\_LessonPlan\\_03.pdf](https://thefirstdayfilm.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/TFD_LessonPlan_03.pdf)

## **LESSON 4: A NOTE TO MYSELF**

This final lesson offers students the opportunity to explore storytelling as a potential tool for self-awareness, self-analysis and healing. Honest self-reflection and expression of our personal histories can lead us towards forgiveness for ourselves and others and guide us towards better choices for our futures.

[https://thefirstdayfilm.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/TFD\\_LessonPlan\\_04.pdf](https://thefirstdayfilm.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/TFD_LessonPlan_04.pdf)

# RESOURCES FOR SCHOOLS, PARENTS AND STUDENTS

There is a wealth of resources available for youth, parents, caregivers, educators, health professionals, and support professionals working with individuals at risk for substance use or who have a substance use disorder. We recommend using the free resources available from our nonprofit partners, **Herren Project**, **Center on Addiction** and **Partnership for Drug-Free Kids**, to learn more.

In the meantime, here are a few resources to begin learning more:

## RESOURCES FROM CENTER ON ADDICTION/PARTNERSHIP FOR DRUG-FREE KIDS

- <https://drugfree.org/landing-page/get-help-support/> - General landing page for resources to support for parents/families
- <https://drugfree.org/resources/> - Links to specific resources for parents to help them understand the issues around substance use, talk to their kids, and learn how to get help for a child showing signs of risk. Of particular relevance:
  - **Tips on Prevention** (links to resources such as Tips for Every Age, How to Address Underage Drinking, How to Talk About Marijuana, How to Talk About Vaping, Safeguard Against Medicine Abuse)
  - **All About the Teen Years** (links to resources on teen brain development, risk factors, parenting strategies, etc.)
  - **Heroin, Fentanyl & Other Opioids eBook**
  - **Intervention eBook**
  - **Treatment eBook**
  - **Marijuana Talk Kit**
  - Free Downloadable Guides:
    - + Vaping: What You Need to Know & How to Talk to Your Kids About Vaping
    - + Drug Guide for Parents
    - + Preventing Teen Abuse of Prescription Drugs
    - + How to Have a Conversation, Not a Confrontation
- **E-cigarettes Information Portal for Parents**
- Additional resources specific to teens and prevention:  
<https://www.centeronaddiction.org/addiction-prevention/teenage-addiction>
- A **guide for finding quality addiction treatment**
- Report: **Adolescent Substance Use: America's #1 Public Health Problem** and brief **PowerPoint presentation of findings**
- Book: How to Raise a Drug-Free Kid – brief **PowerPoint presentation**

## RESOURCES FROM HERREN PROJECT

- **Student Information and Resources:** A page of information and resources designed to help you find answers to questions you may have as a result of the presentation.
- **Ask Chris Herren & His Team A Question:** Have a question for Chris Herren and his team after watching the film? First we suggest reaching out to a trusted adult in your community such as a school counselor, teacher, coach or parent. This form is not intended for group emails or to be assigned as a part of a classroom assignment or lesson plan.

*Please note: This question form is not monitored 24 hours a day. If you have an emergency, please call 911. The Herren Project will protect the confidentiality of all information received, unless: we are mandated by a court of law, a disclosure is required to prevent clear and imminent danger to you or others, or we are made aware of potential or actual occurrence(s) of abuse of minors, persons with disabilities or senior citizens.*

- **Herren Project in Schools:** Your school can continue Chris Herren's *First Day* message year-round by implementing a Herren Project Club. Herren Project Clubs create a peer network in schools to empower youth to make healthy decisions. They encourage overall wellness, development of life coping skills and leadership in their community.

That struggle stopped the  
day I started talking about it

~ CHRIS HERREN ~



# CITATIONS

1. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2017/01/13/changing-language-addiction>
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3. <https://casel.org/what-is-sel/>
4. <https://casel.org/impact/>
5. <https://casel.org/what-is-sel/>
6. <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline>
7. <https://drugfree.org/article/get-one-on-one-help/>

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