

# Angela's Artist Advice

Angela Marie Eidenmiller is the ISSA Associate Director of Artist Relations. Over the past few years many of our Award Winning Artists have benefited from Angela's sage advice.

**New Year, Same Pressure:** But You Don't Have to Carry It Alone

A new year doesn't magically erase the pressure independent musicians carry—it just resets the calendar and asks us to keep going.
The independent music world looks glamorous from the outside. Creative freedom. No gatekeepers. Your rules, your voice, your path. In reality, it's also a world where you're the artist, the manager, the marketer, the accountant, the booking agent, the content creator, the customer service department, and—on especially spicy days—the emotional support human for yourself.

Independent musicians are expected to be everything at once. You write and perform music, but you're also chasing algorithms you didn't invent, posting content you don't love, and analyzing engagement like it's a personality test. You spend hours crafting a heartfelt post only to watch a blurry video you posted accidentally outperform it by 400%. (The algorithm is a mysterious raccoon. We do not negotiate with it.)

The pressure never really shuts off. Even rest feels suspicious—like if you relax for one evening, the internet will forget you exist, your momentum will evaporate, and someone younger with better lighting will steal your audience while you're brushing your teeth.

Growth is public. Comparison is constant. And suddenly your self-worth is doing parkour based on numbers that change daily for reasons nobody fully understands.

When things slow down, many artists turn the pressure inward. I should be further along. Everyone else is winning. I must be doing something wrong. (They aren't winning. They're just posting highlights and crying privately like the rest of us.)

Over time, that internal narrative can quietly drain confidence, joy, and mental health—even when the love for music itself is still very much alive.

Industry research consistently shows that musicians experience higher-than-average levels of anxiety, depression, and burnout. Financial instability, isolation, unpredictable schedules, performance pressure, and the expectation to always be "on" all stack up. Add social media—where success is measured publicly, loudly, and with charts—and it's no wonder many independent artists feel overwhelmed or alone, even when surrounded by fans and peers.

What makes this especially tricky is that musicians are often taught to push through. Hustle harder. Stay grateful. Don't complain. Keep creating. Smile. But ignoring mental and emotional strain doesn't make it disappear—it just turns it into emotional debt with interest. And suffering quietly is not a prerequisite for being talented, professional, or "cut out for this."

Getting support isn't quitting. It's maintenance. Just like changing strings before they snap or resting your voice before it mutinies, mental health care is part of sustaining a long career.

The good news is the industry is finally starting to acknowledge this, and there are real, credible resources built specifically for musicians—people who understand irregular income, touring exhaustion, creative burnout, and why "just take a day off" is not the solution everyone thinks it is.

Your music matters.
But so do you—the human making it.
Preferably a human who's rested, supported, and still enjoys making music.

So we've named the pressure. Now what?

Start small. Talk to someone who understands this industry. Reach out before you're in crisis, not after. Schedule rest like it's part of your job—because it is. And remember that momentum doesn't disappear just because you paused to take care of yourself.

You don't need to fix everything this year. You don't need to "win" January. You just need to stay well enough to keep creating—and connected enough to remember you're not doing this alone.

This year isn't about grinding harder.
It's about lasting longer.

Until the next newsletter, go forth ISSA friends and continue to CONNECT authentically, CREATE fearlessly, and confidently keep CONTRIBUTING your music to the world.

The world needs your music now more than ever.

— Your ISSA Sis,
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# Resources & Support for Independent Musicians

MusiCares
Mental health support, financial assistance, recovery programs, and emergency aid for music professionals
https://www.musicares.org/get-help

Backline
Therapy referrals, support groups, and wellness resources built specifically for the music industry
https://backline.care

SIMS Foundation
Mental health and substance-use support for musicians and their families
https://simsfoundation.org

Sweet Relief Musicians Fund
Financial assistance for musicians facing illness, disability, or crisis
https://www.sweetrelief.org

Music Health Alliance
Healthcare access, insurance navigation, and medical advocacy for music professionals
https://www.musichealthalliance.com

To Write Love on Her Arms
Crisis support and tools to find local mental health help worldwide
https://twloha.com/find-help

Immediate Crisis Support (U.S.)
Call or text 988 — Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (24/7, free, confidential)
International Crisis Support
https://www.opencounseling.com/suicide-hotlines