

Opioid Resources, Call to Action, FAQ's

Resources suggested by our panel

- **The Surgeon General's Landmark Report: Facing Addiction in America** <https://addiction.surgeongeneral.gov/>
- **Allies in Recovery** alliesinrecovery.net
An online-learning platform for families whose loved one struggles with drugs or alcohol.
- **Learn to Cope** learn2cope.org A non-profit support network that offers education, resources, peer support and hope for parents and family members coping with a loved one addicted to opiates or other drugs.
- **How Childhood Trauma Affects Health Across a Lifetime** – Dr. Nadine Burke Harris https://www.ted.com/talks/nadine_burke_harris_how_childhood_trauma_affects_health_across_a_lifetime Many individuals suffering from a substance use disorder (SUD) have had some type of childhood trauma in their lives.
- **Childhood Adverse Experiences (ACES Study)** <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/index.html>
Childhood experiences are an important public health issue. Both positive and negative, they have a tremendous impact on future violence victimization and perpetration, and lifelong health and opportunity.
- **The Brien Center** <http://www.briencenter.org/> Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services ~ provides a continuum of care for children, adolescents, adults and families who suffer from serious and persistent behavioral health disorders.
- **Addiction as a Brain Disease** <https://ruthpotee.com/videos/> Series of videos by Dr. Potee on the causes of addiction (genetics, early exposure and childhood trauma) and how they affect the brain; and making a case for treating addiction as a disease – not a character flaw.
- **Stop the Stigma** <https://www.stopstigma.org/>
According to the World Health Organization (WHO), stigma is a major cause of discrimination and exclusion and it contributes to the abuse of human rights. When a person experiences stigma, they are seen as less than because of their real or perceived health status.

Call to Action suggestions

Prevention Works Youth who avoid drug use in their teens and early 20's, when the brain is still developing, are much more likely to avoid life-long addiction. Recommendations from Massachusetts Governor Baker's Opioid Working Group include: a comprehensive evidence-based school curriculum that address underlying social and psychological issues and build student skills and self-confidence; parent education about signs of addiction; community coalition initiatives; local drug-free school initiatives; prescriber and patient education; and drug take-back programs. These area a few sites with prevention ideas.

Partnership for Drug-Free Kids [https://drugfree.org/landing-page/learn/prevention/Strategic-Planning-Initiative-for-Families-and-Youth \(SPIFFY\)](https://drugfree.org/landing-page/learn/prevention/Strategic-Planning-Initiative-for-Families-and-Youth-(SPIFFY)-Coalition)

Coalition <https://www.collaborative.org/programs/community-health/spiffy-coalition>

Hampshire HOPE - Heroin Opioid, Prevention and

Education <http://www.hampshirehope.org/>

SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF)

<https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/20190620-samhsa-strategic-prevention-framework-guide.pdf>

Recovery Centers are critical – Find out what is available in your community and what the centers need. It might be mentoring, volunteering, sharing your skills. Perhaps you could collect and donate items that would encourage the youth or adults that are served in programs i.e. books, gift cards, toiletries, mp3 players, earbuds, socks, etc.

Opioid Taskforce help ensure efforts are being well coordinated and are as easy to access (as much as possible) and to put out messages that recovery is possible by offering hope and help to those suffering from addiction, some communities are establishing an Opioid taskforce. – Find out what is available in your area and what kinds of support they might need to make life easier for individuals with opioid dependence and their families, and to educate the public.

The following are sample tools provided by the **Opioid Taskforce of Franklin County and the North Quabbin Region:**

- [Task Force structure, goals and major projects/initiatives](#)
- [The Opioid Task Force one-page Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Related Services guide](#)
- [An overdose prevention flyer - how to administer nalcen and where to obtain it locally](#)
- [A "How to Administer Narcan" infographic](#)
- ["Recognizing the Signs of Overdose" infographic](#)
- [Safe Storage infographic/postcard image](#)
- [Opioid Awareness Poster](#)
- [Opioid Treatment and Recovery services](#)

Stop the Stigma – Each of us can help by changing the way we think about, talk about and treat people with addiction. The stigma of drug misuse keeps people from seeking treatment. Words like “junkie,” “addict” and “druggie” can hurt, damaging self-image and standing in the way of recovery. Addiction is not a choice. It’s a chronic disease similar to diabetes, heart disease and

arthritis. Stigma is rarely based on facts but rather on assumptions, preconceptions, and generalizations; therefore, its negative impact can be prevented or lessened through education. <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/stop-addiction/state-without-stigma/>

Educate Yourself and Others about Harm Reduction – Mandatory use of seatbelts in cars, bike helmets, hand washing, safe sex practices, infant and toddler car seats and speed limits are all harm reduction measures. Consider that harm reduction may be an approach or strategy aimed at reducing the risks and harmful effects associated with substance use and addictive behaviors. Recognizing that abstinence may be neither a realistic or a desirable goal for some users (especially in the short term), the use of substances is accepted as a fact, and the main focus is placed on reducing harm while use continues. Safe injection equipment/syringe access (“needle exchange,” naloxone (Narcan) access, and opioid replacement therapies (suboxone, methadone) are ALL harm reduction strategies. <http://homelesshub.ca/blog/why-harm-reduction-model-so-important>

Opioid Addiction is Treatable – Patients with physical and psychological dependence succeed much more often with an initial inpatient admission (2-3 days) at a hospital/facility where methadone or suboxone can be initiated and where they can work with a social worker to discharge them to (1) an outpatient facility for medication assisted treatment (MAT) and (2) a behavioral health connection for recovery. Treatment saves lives AND money. For every 1\$ spent treating people struggling with addiction we save society \$7 that we currently spending dealing with the consequences of active addiction. Advocate for funding of evidence-based treatments in your community

Q&A published recently from AARP

What should I do if prescribed an opioid?

Ask if there is a way to deal with the pain other than taking a narcotic. If an opioid is the only option, use as little as possible and work with your doctor on "a game plan for when you will be off the opioids," says David B. Agus, M.D., professor of medicine and engineering at the University of Southern California. Avoid activities that may be affected by potent drugs, such as making critical decisions or driving.

What are the signs that I may be addicted?

"When you can't stop yourself from taking the opioid, and your tolerance to the effects of the opioid goes up, you should pay attention," Agus says. If you fear that you may be addicted, consult with your prescribing physician, he says. Also, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration offers a confidential help line that can connect you with treatment services in your state. Call 800-662-HELP (800-662-4357).

What should I do with unused opioids?

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) advises that you seek out a take-back program so that experts can dispose of them. Call the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) at 800-882-9539 to find a collector in your area. If you must dispose of them yourself, the FDA offers these steps. First, mix the medicines with dirt, coffee grounds or cat litter; do not crush the tablets or capsules. Then place the mixture in a sealed plastic bag and put it in your household trash. Also, before discarding empty pill bottles, scratch out all personal information on the label.

How can I help an addicted friend?

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) advises that you try to convince your family member or friend to get a doctor's evaluation. Go to the family physician or find a specialist through the American Society of Addiction Medicine or the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry. Be positive and encouraging. Addiction is a medical matter, not a character flaw; repeated use of opioids actually changes the brain, according to NIDA's website, drugabuse.gov. "Emphasize ... that it takes a lot of courage to seek help for a drug problem," the site says.

How can I report a "bad" doctor?

Complaints against doctors, including those who are "prescribing drugs in excess or without legitimate reason," are handled by state medical boards, which license physicians. Find the board for your state through the directory at the Federation of State Medical Boards' website, fsmb.org.

How can I report illegal drug sales?

Contact your local police or submit a tip to the DEA through an online form. Or call a regional DEA office; there's a directory at dea.gov/about/domesticoffices.shtml