

Photos Courtesy of Briana Kratzer

OPIOID AWARENESS MANUAL

Northwestern Connecticut Community College





Table of Contents

- 3...President's Message
- 4...What are Opioids?
- 5...What is Prescription Drug Abuse
- 5...Naloxone
- 5...Opioid Overdose Data
- 6...Common Risk Factors for Opioid Overdose
- 7...Sign of an Overdose and What to Do
- 8...Five Myths of Drug Abuse & Addiction
- 9...Current Laws
- 10...Local Recovery Centers
- 11...Naloxone + Opioid Response App (NORA)
- 12...Federal, State and National Resources



Message from the Northwestern President Michael A. Rooke

To all NCCC students, Welcome,

To the fall semester and the start of the 2020-2021 academic year! Starting a new academic year is always an exciting time for everyone here and I hope for you also.

We are extremely proud that once again, for the fifth year in a row, Northwestern Connecticut Community College was ranked as the best community college in Connecticut! This recognition demonstrates the hard work and dedication by all the faculty and staff who choose to work here to help you, and for the amazing students that have studied here and become successful. We are also extremely proud to have been ranked as #6 best community college in the entire USA, out of 650 colleges ranked!

We are very mindful that beginning a new journey at NCCC during a pandemic will prove to be extremely challenging for you all, as it has been for all of us here.

In addition to the pandemic, Connecticut has been impacted by the opioid epidemic. One in ten Connecticut high school students reported taking prescription pain medications without a prescription or differently than prescribed (Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2017). Over 30% of these students got the medications from their home, someone else's home, or were given the medications. In 2018, there were 1,017 accidental intoxication deaths in the state (Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, 2019). Of these deaths, 948 involved some type of opioid. A total of 760 of these deaths involved fentanyl, while 407 deaths involved heroin, morphine and/or codeine.

On average, two people die of a drug overdose every day in Connecticut. More people die here from overdoses than in car accidents or by gunshot. Most often, Connecticut's overdose deaths took place in homes—sometimes those of the victim's mother, sister, father, brother, or friend.

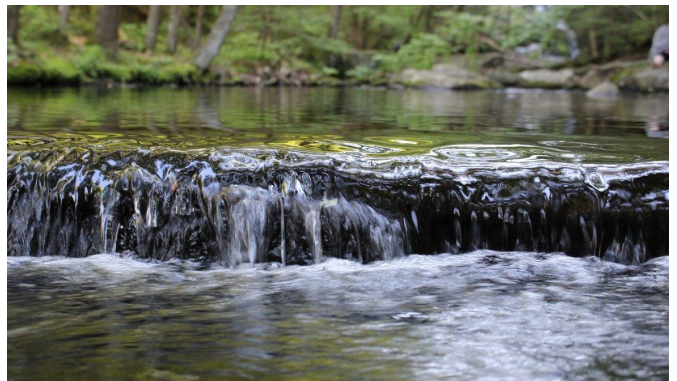
This is NOT an easy time to be a college student; many of you have suffered financial losses, and too many of you have lost loved ones due to COVID-19. We have many, many caring and dedicated people here at the college who can help and support you. Do not be afraid to ask for help if you need it. I encourage you to get to know your professors and everyone here who can support and guide you to success. Whether that is your advisor, the student development center, friends, and fellow students, we all want you to be successful. There are many support services here that you can access.

We know that all our students have challenges and difficult lives. It is not easy juggling everything. So, if you need some help, know that we are all here to support you. Have a wonderful semester and stop by and say hello any time. My office is in the Duffy Administration building, alongside Founders Hall. The door is always open.

Michael A. Rooke, Ph.D. President Northwestern Connecticut Community College

HEROIN AND OPIOID AWARENESS & PREVENTION TOOLKIT

Northwestern Connecticut Community College (NCCC) strives to assist our faculty, staff and students and their families live long and healthy lives through wellness education, resources and programs. As the opioid epidemic has, and continues to impact many of us, the following resources are being made available.



“When everything seems like an uphill struggle, just think of the view from the top.”

”

WHAT ARE OPIOIDS?

Opioids are a class of drugs that include the illegal drug heroin, synthetic opioids such as fentanyl, and pain relievers available legally by prescription, such as oxycodone (OxyContin®), hydrocodone Vicodin®), codeine, morphine, and many others. When used correctly under a health care provider's direction, prescription pain medicines are helpful. However, misusing prescription opioids risks dependence and addiction.

WHAT IS PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE?

There are several ways legally prescribed opioid drugs can be abused...Taking prescription painkillers in a way that was not prescribed, such as taking too many pills at one time, combining pills with alcohol or other drugs, or crushing pills into powder to snort or inject them. Taking someone else's prescription painkiller, even if you're doing so for the medication's intended purpose, to ease pain. Taking prescription pain killers for the sole purpose of feeling good or getting high.



WHAT IS NALOXONE?

Naloxone is a medication approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to prevent overdose by opioids such as heroin, morphine, and oxycodone. It blocks opioid receptor sites, reversing the toxic effects of the overdose. Naloxone (NARCAN®) can be given by intranasal spray, intramuscular (into the muscle), subcutaneous (under the skin), or intravenous injection.

OPIOID OVERDOSE DATA

In Connecticut, residents are more likely to die from unintentional drug overdose than a motor vehicle accident. The majority of these deaths are linked to overdose of prescription opioid painkillers and illicit opioids. According to the CDC, the 2016 Connecticut age-adjusted rate for drug induced mortality is 25.1 per 100,000 population compared to the 2016 national rate of 17.1. The Connecticut Department of Public Health presents an interactive dashboard with drug overdose data to increase public awareness about the impact of the opioid crisis in Connecticut. In this dashboard, demographic, geographic and type of drug-related overdose information can be visualized through the years from 2015 to 2020.



HOW DID WE GET HERE?

In the late 1990s, pharmaceutical companies reassured the medical community that patients would not become addicted to prescription opioid pain relievers, and healthcare providers began to prescribe them at greater rates. This subsequently led to widespread diversion and misuse of these medications before it became clear that these medications could indeed be highly addictive; opioid overdose rates began to increase. In 2015, more than 33,000 Americans died as a result of an opioid overdose, including prescription opioids, heroin, and illicitly manufactured fentanyl.

COMMON RISK FACTORS FOR OPIOID OVERDOSE:

- Mixing opioids with other drugs, particularly alcohol or sedatives.
- Resumption of use after a period of abstinence from opioid use, such as recent release from a rehabilitation center or from incarceration.
- Elderly persons may forget that they already took their medication and accidentally re-take the same medication.
- Younger age, specifically the teens or early 20s exposed to peer pressure or a social environment where there is drug use.

SIGNS OF AN OPIOID OVERDOSE:

- Face is extremely pale and/or clammy to the touch.
- Body is limp.
- Fingernails or lips have a blue or purple cast.
- Vomiting or making gurgling noises.
- Cannot be awakened from sleep or is unable to speak.
- Breathing is very slow or stopped.
- Heartbeat is very slow or stopped.

“

“But when it comes to the inner situation, there is only one ingredient: you. At least you must happen the way you want.”

— Jaggi Vasudev, *Three Truths of Well Being: The Mind*

”



WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I SEE AN OVERDOSE?

- Call 911 immediately!
- Support the person's breathing.
- Administer naloxone (Narcan) if you have it.
- Lay the person on their side once they have resumed breathing.
- Stay with the overdosed person until the ambulance arrives.

5 MYTHS ABOUT DRUG ABUSE AND ADDICTION

MYTH 1: Overcoming addiction is simply a matter of willpower. You can stop using drugs if you really want to. Prolonged exposure to drugs alters the brain in ways that result in powerful cravings and a compulsion to use. These brain changes make it extremely difficult to quit by sheer force of will.

MYTH 2: Addiction is a disease; there is nothing you can do about it. Most experts agree that addiction is a brain disease, but that does not mean you are a helpless victim. The brain changes associated with addiction can be treated and reversed through therapy, medication, exercise, and other treatments.

MYTH 3: Addicts have to hit rock bottom before they can get better. Recovery can begin at any point in the addiction process—and the earlier, the better. The longer drug abuse continues, the stronger the addiction becomes and the harder it is to treat. Do not wait to intervene until the addict has lost it all.

MYTH 4: You cannot force someone into treatment; they have to want help. Treatment does not have to be voluntary to be successful. People who are encouraged into treatment by their family, employer, or the legal system are just as likely to benefit as those who choose to enter treatment on their own. As they sober up and their thinking clears, many formerly resistant addicts decide they want to change.

MYTH 5: Treatment did not work before, so there is no point trying again. Recovery from drug addiction is a long process that often involves setbacks. Relapse does not mean that treatment has failed or that you are a lost cause. Rather, it is a signal to get back on track, either by going back to treatment or adjusting the treatment approach.

A photograph of Founders Hall, a multi-story brick building with a classical portico. The portico has white columns and a pediment with the words "FOUNDERS HALL" inscribed on it. The building has large windows with white frames. The foreground shows a cobblestone walkway.

CURRENT LAWS RELATED TO OPIOID OVERDOSE PREVENTION

A comprehensive report from June 25, 2018, entitled “Connecticut’s Opioid Drug Abuse Laws,” can be found at <https://www.cga.ct.gov/olr/> via the search bar.

In 2011, a “Good Samaritan Law” was passed to protect people who call 911 seeking emergency medical services for an overdose from arrest for possession of drugs/paraphernalia. It does not protect someone from other charges or stop the police from serving a search or arrest warrant if that was already in process.

The Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) Opioid Overdose Prevention and Awareness Policy can be found at <https://www.ct.edu> and typing Opioid Policy in the search bar.

LOCAL RECOVERY CENTERS

High Watch Recovery Center

P.O. Box 607 Kent, CT 06757

860-927-3772

<https://highwatchrecovery.org/>

McCall Center for Behavioral Health

58 High St Torrington, CT 06790

Admissions 860.496.2107 | Outpatient: 860.496.2100 | Residential: 860-496-2107

<https://www.mccallcenterct.org/>

Mountainside Treatment Center

187 South Canaan Road, Route 7 Canaan, CT 06018

860- 824- 1397

<https://mountainside.com/>

Turnbridge

189 Orange Street New Haven, CT 06510

203-508-6660

<https://www.turnbridge.com/>

CT State Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS)

Torrington Clinic - 140 Commercial Blvd. Torrington, CT 06040

(860)-482-8796

<https://portal.ct.gov/DMHAS/Programs-and-Services/Opioid-Treatment/Opioid-Treatment-Programs>

NALOXONE + OPIOID RESPONSE APP (NORA)

The Naloxone + Opioid Response App (NORA) is a free interactive educational tool that will expand the understanding of what naloxone is and reinforce initial training given when a person fills their prescription for it. The vital role naloxone plays in reversing an opioid overdose has been cited by the Surgeon General's office. You can access the app at www.norasaves.com.

The app will:

- Provide resources for people interested in learning about opioids.
- Recognize the signs of an opioid overdose and how to respond.
- Explain the protections offered by the Good Samaritan Law.
- Provide information on proper storage and disposal.
- Connect people with other resources to prevent overdose and to find treatment and recovery supports.



FEDERAL, STATE AND NATIONAL RESOURCES

CHANGE THE SCRIPT

A state-wide campaign to provide prevention, treatment, and recovery resources for people impacted by prescription drug misuse and addiction.

Helpguide.org:

<http://www.helpguide.org/articles/addiction/drug-abuse-and-addiction.htm>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA):

<https://www.samhsa.gov/>

Talking to Your Kids About Prescription Drug Abuse, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

SAMHSA Opioids: Overdose Prevention Toolkit can be found:

<https://www.samhsa.gov/>

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA):

<http://teens.drugabuse.gov/drug-facts/prescription-drugs>

Family Check Up: Positive Parenting Prevents Drug Abuse (NIDA):

<http://www.drugabuse.gov/sites/default/files/files/Famliycheckupall.pdf>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

<https://www.hhs.gov/opioids/prevention/index.html>