



Overdose Prevention Protocol

How to Help Reduce Staff Trauma

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Outline

- How does my background inform this work?
- Risk factors for staff and client trauma
- Resources

Toward the Heart

Take Home Naloxone: A Guide to Promote Staff Resiliency & Prevent Distress After An Overdose Reversal (2015):

http://towardtheheart.com/assets/naloxone/naloxone-staff-resiliency-final_185.pdf

Risk Factors

- Adverse outcome of the overdose in spite of naloxone intervention
- Staff inexperience
- Real or perceived lack of organizational support
- Role ambiguity in the work place

Risk Factors Con't

- Feeling of “too much responsibility”
- Accumulated prior traumas
- Client’s familiarity with staff
- Client’s age
- Environmental factors
- Legal concerns

Recommendations

- Develop an overdose response protocol that is:
 - Setting specific
 - Ensures staff are supported
 - Encourage clients to use drugs safely

Resources

- See VCH/FH checklist of protocol development recommendations on the VCH Prevention & Response webpage:

<http://www.vch.ca/media/Overdose-Prevention-Checklist.pdf>

- Toward the Heart
- Health Authorities

OVERDOSE PREVENTION & RESPONSE PROTOCOL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS



PURPOSE

Provide guidance for service providers to develop overdose (OD) prevention and response policies and protocols.

OD PREVENTION & RESPONSE: FIRST AID & HARM REDUCTION TRAINING

Does your staff have:

- OD prevention and response training?** Provincial training resources and a [Training Manual](#) can be found at TowardTheHeart.com. Contact your local health authority for training support.
- First Aid Training** that includes responding to overdoses? This is essential for unregulated care providers working where overdose risk is high.
- Harm Reduction Training?** Knowledge of harm reduction practices is fundamental for staff who work with people who use substances. Harm reduction addresses: safer use of drugs and alcohol; appropriate use of harm reduction equipment; access to health care; personal and cultural safety practices; and mechanisms for dealing with critical incidents. Contact your local health authority for training opportunities. Access the online [Harm Reduction Training](#) from the Course Catalogue Registration System (CCRS).

SUBSTANCE USE PROTOCOL

Does your agency:

- Have a substance use protocol** (examples found [here](#))? Policies that force drug use off site (or to be hidden) increase risk of undetected ODs, and greatly diminish your staff's ability to intervene effectively.
- Have punitive sanctions or a Residential Tenancy Agreement that states that "any drug-related criminal activity" is a reason for end of tenancy?** This will likely inhibit communication about drug use and overdoses.
- Have a substance use protocol known by all clients?** Share it with clients in casual conversations or posters.

OVERDOSE PREVENTION

Does your agency:

- Recommend that all staff who have contact with clients receive the training referenced above?**
- Have a protocol addressing both onsite and offsite ODs?**
- Track staff training?** Does training happen yearly?
- Have an agency staff trainer** (or an external resource)? This will help with timely new staff and client trainings.
- Have OD response drills at regular intervals at each facility in your agency?**
- Identify quiet corners where clients and their guests might use substances and be at risk for OD?** e.g. bathrooms, stairwells and develop a system for regularly checking these spaces.
- Have a public bathroom?** If so, does this space have its own protocol to prevent ODs that includes:
 - Regular safety checks?
 - Secured, tamper resistant sharps containers?
 - Locks that can be opened from the outside?
 - Posted bathroom protocol for clients to see?
- Have regular site assessments?** This will ensure a review of all OD prevention and response measures.

Does your agency have signage that includes:

- List of staff who are trained in OD response** (particularly if not all staff are trained)?
- List of clients who are trained in OD response** (voluntary)?

Checklist, guide to individualize agency overdose protocol:

- Training
- Protocol example references
- Overdose prevention:
 - setting specific
 - client focused
- Overdose response
- Post overdose follow-up
- Client involvement

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