**WHAT ARE OPIOIDS?**

Opioids are drugs that are usually used to treat pain. Some commonly used opioids include:

- fentanyl
- morphine
- heroin
- methadone
- oxycodone

Any of these can be administered as tablets, capsules, syrups, liquids for injection, nose sprays, skin patches or suppositories.

**WHAT DO OPIOIDS DO?**

Opioids belong to a group of drugs known as depressants. Depressants slow the activity of the brain and the body. Opioids decrease respiratory drive (the urge to breathe). As breathing decreases (and eventually stops), there is less oxygen in the blood, the lack of oxygen causes brain damage. Oxygen starvation results in organ failure of the heart, the brain, and eventually, death.

**WHAT IS NALOXONE?**

Naloxone can temporarily reverse an overdose if it is administered right away. Naloxone can be administered while waiting for professional help to arrive.
### Partnerships
Are there local community agencies (health unit, harm reduction agency, etc.) with whom the library can partner? Are there other agencies in the building who should be consulted / would benefit from shared training?

### Supply
How can Naloxone kits be acquired (purchase, via community partnerships, from the pharmacy, etc.)? How many Naloxone kits are needed on site?

### EMS
How long does it take for Emergency Medical Services to reach your public library?

### Training
If training is provided to staff members, will it be mandatory? Will all staff be trained? Will security staff be included in training?

### Non-judgment
How to ensure that staff are able to proceed only if they are comfortable to do so?

### Staff wellness
How would staff be supported following an incident? E.g. mindfulness training, counselling services, debriefing, etc.

### Risk Management
What safety protocols and procedures are required? Is there any insurance implication?

### Policies
How will incidents be recorded/documentated? Will there be a written policy regarding Opioid overdose responses?

### Naloxone kits
Naloxone is a drug that can temporarily reverse an opioid overdose. Some brand names include Narcan, Nalone, Evzio, Prenoxad, Narcanti, and Narcotan.

There are two kinds of Naloxone kits commonly available:
1. Injectable
2. Nasal Spray

Naloxone kits are offered to **police and fire services**. Some **school boards and community-based organizations** may also supply naloxone kits to their staff members, or distribute them to community members.

### Sourcing Naloxone kits
Naloxone kits can be acquired in a number of different ways. Some libraries purchase Naloxone kits themselves, acquire kits from pharmacies, or have kits supplied through partnerships with local community agencies.

---

**LIBRARIES AND NALOXONE**
Naloxone kits and training on how to use them have been made available to library staff or security guards at:
- Toronto Public Library
- Niagara Falls Public Library
- Barrie Public Library
- Vancouver Public Library
- Calgary Public Library
- Edmonton Public Library
- Camrose Public Library

**WHO IS IMPACTED BY THE OPIOID CRISIS?**
Opioid use, addiction, and overdose impact Ontarians and their families in communities large and small, from all socio-demographic backgrounds.
For instance, Niagara Falls Public Library works in partnership with Streetworks, a local non-profit organization who supply the kits, pick up used kits, and provide training to staff.

In Ontario, Naloxone kits are available free to individuals by participating Ontario pharmacies and select community agencies. Individuals are eligible for a free kit if you are:

- a current opioid user or a past user who is at risk of using again
- a family member, friend or other person able to help someone at risk of an opioid overdose
- a client of a needle syringe program or hepatitis C program
- newly released from a correctional facility

**Risk Management**

**Health and safety concerns**

There are some risks to staff members associated with administering Naloxone. Staff training and library policy should address these concerns and can help increase staff capacity to mitigate these risks (e.g. provide gloves in all Naloxone kits, keep extra kits on hand in case of accidental transmission of the opioid, etc.).

Some concerns may include⁴:

1. Biological concerns: a person who is overdosing is likely to vomit.
2. Transmission of the opioid itself is also a risk. Some forms of opioids, including carfentanil, are so potent that transmission of even a few grains (either through the skin, inhaled or ingested) can be dangerous to the health of the responder.
3. Workers who are administering the drug have to be in close contact with the recipient. A person who is overdosing may be unpredictable and potentially confused about their surroundings. They may attempt to strike out if they feel threatened. Their conduct might increase the chance of injury, especially if they become aggressive during the withdrawal.

**The Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act⁵**

The Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act provides some legal protection for people who experience or witness an overdose and call 9-1-1 for help.

The act can protect you from:

- Charges for possession of a controlled substance (i.e. drugs) under section 4(1) of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act
- Breach of conditions regarding simple possession of controlled substances (i.e. drugs) in:
  - pre-trial release
  - probation orders
  - conditional sentences
  - parole

The Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act applies to anyone seeking emergency support during an overdose, including the person experiencing an overdose. The act protects the person who seeks help, whether they stay or leave from the overdose scene before help arrives. The act also protects anyone else who is at the scene when help arrives.
How to recognize an opioid overdose

Someone may have overdosed if they:
• can’t stay awake, walk or talk
• are breathing slowly or not at all
• have a limp body

Other signs of overdose include:
• not responding to noise or knuckles being rubbed hard on their breastbone
• snoring or gurgling sounds
• pale or blue skin – especially on their nail beds and lips – and they feel cold
• tiny pupils (pinpoint) or their eyes are rolled back
• vomiting

Responding to an opioid overdose

1. If you are with someone who has overdosed, call 911 or your local emergency response number immediately.

2. Follow your library’s emergency response procedures, which may include:
   - Perform rescue breathing and/or chest compressions
   - Administer naloxone

   Naloxone can temporarily reverse an overdose if it is administered right away. Naloxone can be administered while waiting for professional help to arrive.

An overdose is always an emergency. Even if someone has taken naloxone, it can wear off before the person has completely recovered from their overdose. They may need more than one dose.

Always call for help.

Works Cited:


www.accessola.com | info@accessola.com | 416-363-3388

October 2018
**Additional Resources**

**Library responses:**


**Opioid and Naloxone:**


**City of Toronto Public Health** - Become a Harm Reduction Partner Agency. [https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/health-wellness-care/health-programs-advice/overdose-resources-become-a-partner-agency/](https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/health-wellness-care/health-programs-advice/overdose-resources-become-a-partner-agency/)


**Media reports - Opioid Crisis in Canada:**

