



OPIOIDS

Mental Health Matters

A Monthly Newsletter from Atlantic Behavioral Health

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS | October 2024

The Opioid Crisis

We must all be committed to fostering a healthy workplace and community. This month we want to address a critical issue affecting many individuals across the United States: the opioid crisis. This epidemic has reached alarming levels, impacting families, workplaces, and society.

What is the Opioid Crisis?

The opioid crisis refers to the widespread misuse of both prescription and non-prescription opioid drugs. Opioids include prescription medications such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, and fentanyl, as well as illegal drugs like heroin. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that over 564,000 people have died from opioid overdoses since 1999. This crisis has resulted in significant social, economic, and health impacts, making it a pressing public health issue.



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Why is This Important to Us?

As a workplace and community, we have a responsibility to create a supportive environment for everyone. The opioid crisis doesn't just affect those who misuse substances; it can impact colleagues, families, and even workplace dynamics. Understanding the problem allows us to provide better support to those who may be struggling and helps us maintain a healthy environment.

Signs and Symptoms

Recognizing the signs of opioid misuse is crucial. Some common indicators include:

- **Changes in behavior:** Withdrawal from social activities, increased absenteeism, or declining work performance
- **Physical symptoms:** Noticeable weight loss, drowsiness, or changes in appearance
- **Emotional changes:** Mood swings, irritability, or heightened anxiety

If you or someone you know is exhibiting these signs, it's important to approach the situation with empathy and understanding.

Support and Resources

We want to emphasize that help is available. Here are some resources for anyone affected by opioid misuse:

1. **Community Resources:** Many local organizations provide support for addiction recovery. Look for community outreach programs or support groups such as Narcotics Anonymous (NA).
2. [Nar-Anon Family Groups](#)
3. [Narcotics Anonymous USA – Freedom from active addiction \(usa-na.org\)](http://usa-na.org)

Taking Action Together

As we navigate this complex issue, it's vital that we support one another. Here are a few steps we can all take:

- **Educate Yourself:** Understanding the facts about opioids can help reduce stigma and promote a more supportive environment.
- **Encourage Open Dialogue:** Create a culture where everyone feels safe discussing mental health and substance use without fear of judgment.
- **Promote Wellness Initiatives:** Engage in wellness programs that focus on physical and mental health.



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Losing a Loved One to an Opioid Overdose

This epidemic doesn't discriminate; it affects individuals from all walks of life, resulting in a staggering loss of potential and vibrancy in our communities. The emotional and financial toll is immense, with families facing not only the heartache of loss but also the challenges of recovery and support. Addressing this crisis requires compassion, awareness, and a collective effort to provide help and hope to those affected.

“Although U.S. opioid deaths remain unacceptably high, after years of relentless escalation, the good news is death rates appear to have crested and are falling as of the second half of 2023: 2% lower in July 2023 versus 2022, and 20% lower in

“To get through the hardest journey, we need take only one step at a time—but we must keep on stepping.”

-Chinese Proverb

December 2023 versus 2022. There are likely several contributing factors, including reduced opioid prescribing, Narcan opioid overdose reversal kits being more widely available, increased prescribing of evidence-based medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD) such as buprenorphine and naltrexone, and bipartisan efforts to stem the flow of fentanyl from Mexico. Plus word is getting out through public health messaging that deadly fentanyl is

contaminating nearly all illicit drugs—cocaine, methamphetamine, and even fake Xanax and other pills—hopefully dissuading some from naively taking street drugs that are not what they appear to be. These are reasons for hope. These are silver linings to find. These are reasons to speak to and support each other, as substance use disorders are ubiquitous and benefit from us staying present and connected with a teamwork frame of mind.”

“Embrace Resilience!”

*-Peter Bolo, MD, chairman, department of psychiatry
Overlook Medical Center*



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CRISIS RESOURCES

If you feel you or someone you know may harm themselves or someone else:

Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: **988**

The Trevor Lifeline for LGBTQIA+ Youth: **1-866-488-7386**

Veterans Crisis Line: **Dial 988 and Press 1**

Dial 211: 211 provides callers with information about and referrals to social services for every day needs and in times of crisis

National Domestic Violence Hotline at **1-800-799-SAFE**

National Sexual Assault Hotline at **1-800-656-HOPE**

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)
24/7 Hotline **1-800-656-4673**

ADDICTION RESOURCES

SAMHSA's National Helpline is a free, confidential, 24/7, 365-day-a-year treatment referral and information service (in English and [Spanish](#))

[Also visit the online treatment locator.](#) Call: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

Alcoholics Anonymous - [Northern New Jersey AA - Meeting Finder \(nnjaa.org\)](#)

Narcotics Anonymous - [NA Meetings in NJ \(narcoticsanonymousnj.org\)](#)

NJ Self Help Clearinghouse 800-367-6274 - [FIND A GROUP | NJSHGCH \(njgroups.org\)](#)

Atlantic Behavioral Health

ACCESS Center:

888-247-1400

Atlantic Behavioral Health Crisis Intervention

Services **24/7 Hotlines:**

Chilton Medical Center: 973-831-5078

Hackettstown Medical Center 908-454 -5141

Morristown Medical Center: 973-540-0100

Overlook Medical Center: 908-522-3586

Newton Medical Center: 973-383-0973

Email: Nomorewhispers@atlantichhealth.org

Website: Atlantichhealth.org



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