



Reducing Overdose Risk: Recommendations for Supportive Housing Programs

Overdose deaths have reached record highs in NYC. In 2023, approximately 10% of fatal overdoses occurred in supportive housing and single-room occupancy settings. Supportive housing staff can help educate residents about overdose risk and prevention and save someone's life in the event of an overdose. Supportive housing programs are expected to develop overdose prevention and response policies to reduce the risk of overdose among residents. The recommendations in this document can help programs with developing these policies and procedures.

1. Educate and train staff and residents to:

- **Identify and respond to a potential overdose.**
 - Train all staff members, including case managers, peers, interns, and security, maintenance, and other personnel, on overdose response and provide them with a naloxone kit.
 - Train residents on overdose response and how to reduce their risk of overdose.
 - Inform residents on how they can get naloxone and where naloxone is located in the building.
 - [Become an opioid overdose prevention program \(OOPP\)](#) (see Page 2 in this document) to provide overdose response trainings and naloxone on-site to staff and residents. You can also partner with an existing OOPP in your area to support training and naloxone access.
 - Visit nyc.gov/naloxone or email naloxone@health.nyc.gov to get training resources and materials on overdose prevention and response for staff and residents.
- **Use harm reduction tools such as fentanyl and xylazine test strips.**
 - Educate staff and residents about the unpredictable, unregulated drug supply and how the risk of overdose is increased by the presence of powerful substances such as fentanyl and xylazine.
 - Train staff members to offer test strips to residents at risk for overdose.
 - Visit your local OOPP in person or the MATTERS Network website (mattersnetwork.org/supplies) to get test strips to offer to residents.
 - Visit nyc.gov/fentanyl for more information and trainings on fentanyl test strips.
- **Create a safety plan to reduce the risk of overdose.**
 - Train case managers and peers to conduct overdose safety planning activities with residents.
 - Visit nyc.gov/alcoholanddrugs for an [overdose safety plan worksheet](#) and [accompanying guidance](#) to support overdose safety planning activities.
 - Inform residents about the Never Use Alone Hotline (877-696-1996; neverusealone.com), which should be available to call using in-room and apartment landlines if possible.

- **Make naloxone easily and widely available.**
 - Make naloxone available 24/7 for communal use in the building by staff and residents. Establish accessible and clearly marked locations in the building for communal naloxone kits to be placed. Locations may include common areas, lobbies, and stairwells.
 - Visit nyc.gov/alcoholanddrugs for a [poster](#) with instructions on how to use naloxone and an area to write in where a naloxone kit is located. Prints of the poster can be ordered at no cost by calling **311**.
 - Visit nyc.gov/naloxone for more information about naloxone in communal spaces.
 - Become an OOPP, which will allow you to get free naloxone and fentanyl test strips from the NYC Health Department to distribute to staff and residents and keep on-site. OOPPs are also equipped to provide naloxone and fentanyl test strip trainings to staff and residents.
 - Alternatively, you can partner with an existing OOPP for support with trainings and to receive free naloxone and fentanyl test strips for your staff and residents.
 - Visit nyc.gov/naloxone and click on [Overdose Prevention Resources for Providers](#) or email naloxone@health.nyc.gov for information on how to become an OOPP.

2. Develop an overdose response plan.

- Identification
 - Train staff to recognize the signs of an opioid overdose as well as the differences between negative reactions to different types of substances, including alcohol.
 - Staff should be aware of how opioid overdoses are impacted by the presence of other substances, such as xylazine, in the opioid supply.
 - Staff should understand how using different types of substances at the same time (for example, alcohol and opioids) impacts overdose risk.
 - Email naloxone@health.nyc.gov for questions about overdose response.
- Intervention
 - Make sure naloxone is kept in an easily accessible, centralized location and that all staff know where to find it and have 24/7 access to it.
 - Identify staff responsibilities: Who will administer naloxone? Who will call **911**? Who will manage crowd control and keep the area safe?
- Response
 - Identify who will continue to monitor the individual after administering naloxone until emergency medical services arrives.
- Reporting
 - Identify who will report cases of naloxone administration and how replacement naloxone kits will be obtained.
 - Report instances of naloxone administration to the NYC Health Department at naloxone@health.nyc.gov.
 - If your organization is already an OOPP, log in with your OOPP ID to nyoverdose.org. Contact naloxone@health.nyc.gov to receive a replacement naloxone kit.
- Follow-up
 - Evaluate the program's response to an overdose event.

- What worked well? Was the response plan followed appropriately? Is there anything that needs improvement?
- Conduct wellness checks for residents who have been impacted by overdose.
- Offer refresher trainings on overdose prevention and response.
- Offer grief and trauma support to staff and residents following an overdose.

3. Identify and establish partnerships with local substance use programs to help support residents who use drugs and make sure they get the services they need.

- For a list of [syringe service programs](#), which provide lifesaving supplies and resources, including sterile drug use equipment, risk reduction education, and connections to health services, visit nyc.gov/alcoholanddrugs.
- For hours and locations of the NYC Health Department’s drug-checking services, which help people identify what is in their drugs and create risk reduction plans, visit nyc.gov/alcoholanddrugs.
- For New York State-certified treatment programs, including opioid treatment programs, that offer medications for opioid use disorder, visit bit.ly/oasas-provider-search.
- For naloxone, fentanyl test strips, and overdose prevention training, visit your local OOPP.
- For more information about recovery centers, which provide a community-based, nonclinical setting to promote long-term recovery goals, visit oasas.ny.gov/regional-services-descriptions.

4. Encourage staff and residents to take mental health first aid and other community response trainings.

- Visit nyc.gov/health and search for [mental health trainings](#) for NYC Health Department trainings, including Mental Health First Aid and Community Wellness and Resilience.

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