How the Opioid Crisis Impacts Individuals and Rural Communities

Learning Objectives
• Define an opioid: What is it?
• Describe how opioids impact the dimensions of health
• Describe the impact of opioids on communities
• Why is this a crisis?
• How to identify addiction
• How can language reduce stigma

Which Drugs are Abused Most Often?
• Pain Relievers aka "Painkillers" (opioid or narcotic pain relievers) are shared/sold to get high, dull pain or to change a mood
• Central Nervous System Depressants or simply "Depressants" (treat anxiety or sleep disorders) are often used to "relax or wind down," or come back down after stimulant use
• Stimulants (attention deficit disorders, narcolepsy, and weight loss) for staying awake or come back up after depressants
Highest Death Rate is this Combo!

1. Opioid Pain Reliever
2. Muscle Relaxant
3. Benzodiazepine

= respiratory depression (opioid)/increased central nervous system depression

Any Drug Has Abuse Potential!

Too bad it was an aneurism that went untreated.

"It was the worst headache ever, on a holiday and my sister had a pain pill."

Too bad you taught a child that Rx are fine shared.

"I was testing to see if he did well on his brother ADD meds."

This script was bought by at an unsavory discount online Pharmacy. It was washed down with a beer, and contained toxic levels of ... ?

"He threw his back out shoveling snow. The neighbor gave him just a single pill."

Addiction Rarely Starts in an Alley!

People who abuse Rx painkillers get drugs from a variety of sources?

- Bought from relative/friend 12%
- Took from relative/friend without asking 5%
- Dealer/stranger 4%
Opioid “Use” vs. “High” vs. “Low”

Long-term
- Nausea/Vomiting
- Bone and Muscle Pain
- Collapsed Veins (IV use)

Overdose Comes via Many Methods

• Accidentally Rx combinations
  - Oversed
    - No checking of Prescription drug monitoring system
    - Patient may or may not disclose all prior Rx (Dentist, Pain Clinic, Psy., etc.)
    - Patient had 1 (or more) older scripts or other person's script(s).

• Intentionally Rx/Street drug combinations
  - Often illegally obtained at this stage
    - Pill mills
    - Dealers
    - Illegitimate Pharmacies
  - Stolen
    - Individuals
    - Poor healthcare facility practices allowed for diversion
    - Other

“Overdose” is Often Daily News

These are NOT all addiction based issues.
How is this Happening “Under a Doctors Care”?

• “First Do No Harm”
  - Disconnects in the system exist
  - Addiction risk varies
  - Symptoms or pain treatment expectation
  - Evolution of the problem
  - Pain is subjective
  - Tolerance can build
  - WITHDRAW can lead to alternatives

Dimensions of Health

“1 in 10” People in the US Need Help!

So, what is the disconnect?
Understanding Addiction

Addiction is:

- Chronic
- Progressive
- Characterized by denial
- Sometimes difficult to spot

Hard to keep #StigmaFree

Disease Model –

Medical fact not well understood by society

Cancer
- Desire for recovery
- Behaviors can intensify
- Goal – Remission
- Chance of recurrence

Addiction
- Desire for recovery
- Behaviors can intensify
- Goal – Sobriety
- Chance of relapse
However, Most People Don’t Get Treatment Voluntarily

• This means admitting they have an issue
• Often plagued with guilt/shame of self
• There is fear of stigma from others
• The system is complicated
• They don’t know how
• There are barriers for many (but often not larger than the future outcomes)

What is the Cost of No Treatment?

Sample Company:
Community Health Network
1. # Employees 13,000
(Volunteers not calculated)
2. Industry: Education, Health, Social Services

www.rec.org/drugstatwork
Did You Know?

Nearly 15 million Americans used prescription drugs, such as pain relievers, tranquilizers, and stimulants, non-medically in the past year. Prescription drug misuse and abuse is an issue that touches people of all socio-economic backgrounds and ages. Take advantage of the AWARE Prescription Drug Safety Program’s resources to keep your loved ones and community safe. Education is key.

Learn how to:

- Buy Medication Safely – purchase medication safely online
- Use and Store Medication Safely – tips & facts for all ages
- Prevent Medication Abuse – what you should know
- Dispose of Medication Safely – find a disposal location

Don’t Get Sucked In

• There are lots of people willing to give bad advice.
• Don’t believe everything you are told:
  • Get second options
  • Ask your local pharmacist
Teach Your Children Well

Rx are Rx for a REASON!
Take them seriously, model good behaviors.

Help an Addicted Loved One/Colleague

• Offer your support
• Express that you understand they are not “their issue”
• Don’t expect that you alone can help them
• Don’t try to find a blame for the source
• Call a reputable treatment center for advice
• Locate and attend an Al-Anon meeting to learn more about the “disease of addiction”

Best Long-Term Practice?

• Teach our children well!
• Model good behavior
• #StigmaFree is critical for those who want to get help
• Keep educating! Thank you.
Reducing Stigma

SAY THIS

- Person with a substance use disorder
- Recovery in progress
- Treatment

NOT THAT

- Addict
- Drug user
- Drug offender
- Suffering from an addiction

Extra Resources

No one should tackle this issue alone.

We are here for you.
Questions?

Contact information:
J. Michelle Sybesma, Chief of Strategy and Development, Parkdale Center for Professionals
(https://www.parkdalecenter.com)