Opioid Crisis Town Hall: Library Needs and Responses

WebJunction and Public Library Association
September 12, 2017
#libsopioidtownhall
Resources

On WebJunction:

Opioid Crisis: Libraries, Resources, Context and Data

Use new Facebook group to share additional news, resources, and library responses:

Libraries and the Opioid Crisis
Agenda

• The opioid crisis impacts libraries – an overview
  • How is your library impacted by the opioid abuse epidemic?

• Crisis response at the library
  • Interacting with patrons in crisis
  • Direct intervention
  • Community support networks

• Wrap up
  • What do you think is the single most important response for a public library in this crisis?
Moderators and Panelists

Betha Gutsche
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Program Manager

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Rachel Fewell
Central Library Administrator, Denver Public Library (CO)

Vanessa Christman
Assistant Director, Santa Barbara Public Library, recently at Humboldt County Public Library (CA)

Shawn Cunningham
Director of Communications and Strategic Initiatives, Multnomah County Public Library (OR)

Kim Fender
Director, Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County (OH)

Dana Murguía
Sr. Program Manager, Public Health, Healthy Communities, Humboldt County, DHHS

Hadi Sedigh
Associate Legislative Director for Justice & Public Safety, National Association of Counties
The opioid crisis impacts libraries

An overview
A national crisis

• Since 2013, overdose has surpassed car crash as the leading cause of preventable death
• 61% of overdose deaths involve an opioid (including heroin)
• At least half overdose deaths involve a prescription opioid

– Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014
Libraries are on the frontlines

• Drug use in the library
• Discarded needles
• Onsite overdoses and fatalities

“libraries are ... uniquely vulnerable to those seeking a place to use drugs.”

— American Libraries, June 21, 2017
How is your library (or your community) impacted by the opioid abuse epidemic?
Crisis responses at the library
Library Responses: what we heard from you

- Provide referrals: 33%
- None: 27%
- Not sure: 20%
- Speakers/Programming: 16%
- New policy/safety measures: 15%
- Information displays: 14%
- Trained staff: 11%
- Information on library website: 7%
Town hall discussion

- Interacting with patrons in crisis
- Direct intervention
- Working with community agents and partners
Topic 1 – Interacting with patrons in crisis

Potential issues

• Recognition and assessment
• Effective engagement
• Confidentiality and patron privacy
• Policy adjustments
• Public education
Approaching opioid abuse in Denver

Department of Environmental Health
- Opioid Specialist
- Harm Reduction Action Center

Denver police department – “co-responder” program funded by Denver Human Services

Denver Public Library – biweekly meetings with mayor’s office and multiple city agencies
Community Resource Specialist Team

- Two Social workers
- Five Peer Navigators
Training for DPL Staff

Social worker-led training
- Trauma-informed systems of care
- Finding resiliency
- Homelessness 101
- Mental health first aid

General HR/City agency provided training
- “Sharps” and hazardous materials training
- Safety at DPL
- Narcan training – 62 staff members trained throughout the system
- Social workers with security staff
Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County

- Our library is not part of the city or county
- Our staff does not administer naloxone
- Rely on first responders, including a special detail police officer in our Main Library afternoons and evenings
Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County

- Overdoses almost exclusively at Main Library – average 1 per week
- Only 2 branches have had an overdose – both also in Cincinnati
- Becoming more public – not just in restrooms
- No arrest or transport
- Staff need to recognize overdose – now assume anyone non-responsive has overdosed

Partnerships Developing

- Working with police
- Hamilton County heroin Coalition
Topic 2 - Direct intervention

• Overview of naloxone

• The pros and cons of training library staff as first responders who can administer overdose antidotes
Opiates are a type of medication or drug

- Heroin
- Oxycontin
- Morphine
- Codeine
- Fentanyl
- Hydrocodone
- Methadone

Dana Murguía
Sr. Program Manager, Public Health, Healthy Communities, Humboldt County, DHHS
What is naloxone?

- Brand name Narcan
- Opiate antagonist
- No abuse potential
- Works ONLY for opioids

Naloxone has a stronger affinity to the opioid receptors than the other opioids or heroin, so it knocks the heroin off the receptors for a short time and lets the person breathe again.
Naloxone distribution in Humboldt County

Naloxone distribution began in 2003

• Overdose death rate in 2003 was 18 times higher than national average
• After one year, opiate overdose deaths decreased by 42%

In 2016

• 1,526 naloxone kits distributed
  • No adverse events reported
• 116 reported overdose reversals with no adverse effects
  • One reversal reported by law enforcement agency
Addressing Legal Concerns

• Laws vary by state
• Good Samaritan Laws
• From the Network for Public Health Law, resource summarizes naloxone access and Good Samaritan laws
Humboldt County Public Library

- Collaboration and staff training is important first step
- Training included spotting overdose; led to our quicker response inside and outside of facility

- Important considerations moving forward
  - Ongoing discussion and training
  - Transparency/clarity in who responds and reports
  - Training a coalition of library staff
  - Setting up systems for training in light of staff turnover

Vanessa Christman
Assistant Director, Santa Barbara Public Library, recently at Humboldt County Public Library (CA)
Communication

• Messaging to stakeholders and the public
  • Security incident reports/reports to the public
  • Interacting with law enforcement: It’s sometimes complicated
• “Bad reputation” concerns
• Owning it = ongoing discussions, outreach, and programming
• Being a conduit for community education
Topic 3 - Community support networks

- Who and how to connect with community agents and partners to address the opioid crisis
Partnerships and paths forward

A community problem
• Libraries: open spaces
• Opioid abuse and overdose are complex issues
• Coordination is key

Turn to partners
• Look to leaders as champions
• Build and deepen relationships
• Rethink how partners can contribute

Look for new approaches
• Borrow and adopt successful strategies
• Be creative
• Support staff

Focus on solutions
• Relationships are key
• Acknowledge limitations
• Resilience is vital

Shawn Cunningham
Director of Communications and Strategic Initiatives, Multnomah County Public Library (OR)
Whole-community effort

- Ways to start the conversation, establish a task force
- Whom to potentially partner with, what relationships to develop
Wrap up

What do you think is the single most important response for a public library in this crisis?
THANK YOU!

Insights gleaned from this town hall will be shared to inform plans for future efforts.

New Facebook group: Libraries and the Opioid Crisis