Public Libraries Respond to the Opioid Crisis with Their Communities
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More than 130 people die in the U.S. everyday from an opioid overdose.

(Rudd, 2016)
Public Libraries Respond to the Opioid Crisis with their Communities

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People are moved to work in the public library because of its unique and unparalleled ability to help anyone learn, do, and grow. PLA’s mission is just as clear: cultivate a community of talented public library professionals where anyone can contribute, and everyone can grow. PLA provides the tools, leadership, and inspiration to help make change work for public libraries.
Project goals

- Collect and share knowledge, resources
- Raise awareness among other sectors
- Address siloed approaches
Project Activities

- Case study research
- Cross-sector discussions
- Call-to-action white paper
- Dissemination to the field
“Obviously, our biggest challenge is that people keep dying and we can’t work fast enough.”

- Community Partner Director
CASE STUDY RESEARCH
Goal of case studies

Explore a diverse set of communities in which the library is an active partner in response to the opioid epidemic.
Criteria considered for site selection

- Diversity of community size, region, geographic distribution, and demographics
- Diversity of service population size
- Health data: uninsured rate, opioid prescribing rate, drug overdose death and mortality rate
- Must have worked with community partners on programs/services related to the opioid crisis
- Represent a range of community interventions
Case study sites

- Everett, WA
- Salt Lake, UT
- New Orleans, LA
- Peoria, IL
- Kalamazoo, MI
- Blount County, TN
- Twinsburg, OH
- Barrington, RI
Data collection

- Internal and external document review
- Up to 9 semi-structured recorded interviews
- Library Director/Deputy Director
- Library Administrator/Manager
- Library Frontline Staff
- Library Board Member
- Community Partner Director
- Community Partner Frontline Staff
- Up to 3 Community Members

(Leedy & Ormrod, 2016)
Interview Questions

**Library Staff**

- How did your library decide to offer this program/service?
- Why do you think it's important for the library to be involved in this work?

**Community Partner**

- What makes the library a strong partner in an effort like this?

**Library Board**

- What has been your overall experience interacting with the library for these programs and services?
Pre-testing the protocols

• Denver Public Library, Community Resource Program
• Pre-test location for the interview protocol
• Feedback on case study template

Photo courtesy: Giles Clasen
Data analysis

- Interviews transcribed
- Code book from interview transcript; emerging themes
- NVivo for data analysis
Types of programs and services

- Naloxone training, staff and patrons
- Community reads and author talks
- Changes to physical layouts in bathrooms
- Peer navigators
- Deterra disposal bags
- Recovery Court
- Awareness and information campaigns
- Mental health and substance abuse related health programming
Overdose Rescue Kit
Includes Narcan, instructions for use and information for more help.

Photo courtesy: Peoria Public Library
Salt Lake County Library System
Use Only As Directed, public awareness campaign.

“Opioids like these can cause physical dependency in just 7 days.”
Salt Lake County Library System
*Use Only As Directed*, public awareness campaign.

7,000 opioid prescriptions are filled every day in Utah.

Photo courtesy: Salt Lake County Library System
New Orleans Public Library, “Bystander Training.”

Provides first aid training, including an opportunity to practice administering naloxone.
Blount County Public Library, life skills training course.

Recovery Court participants attending training sessions at the public library.
Blount County Public Library, life skills training course.

Recovery Court participants attending training on nutrition at the library.

Photo courtesy: Blount County Public Library
Deterra drug deactivation system.

These bags provide a safe way to dispose of unused prescription and over-the-counter medications.
RESEARCH FINDINGS
Outputs reported

- Increased community resources
- Developed new partnerships
- Positive impact on patrons’ lives
- Increased community awareness and knowledge
- Reached other libraries and community organizations
- Addressed stigma
- Increased positive perception of library
“We're so grateful to libraries for their willingness to do this because it is sensitive messaging. We understand that...culturally it has got a lot of stigma associated with it and a lot of misinformation and that can be a delicate thing. But their willingness to address that, and to become ambassadors, and to help eliminate some of that misinformation is a huge benefit to the community as a whole.”

- Community Partner
Opportunities and challenges

Stigma
Opportunities and challenges

Stigma

Funding
“Opiate addicts or people addicted to opiates are less likely to talk about that than people who have other addictions to other substances.”
– Community Partner Director

“There's other people that are very, very guarded. So just ask something like, ‘What's your name?’ And they see me write that down, I could lose trust right there.”
– Community Partner, Frontline Staff
“It benefits me because I feel more prepared to help someone. I think anytime you feel more prepared and trained, you're much more likely to help.”

- Community Member who received naloxone from the library
DENVER, COLORADO
5 Components of Collective Impact

1. Common Agenda
   - Common understanding of the problem
   - Shared vision for change

2. Shared Measurement
   - Collecting data and measuring results
   - Focus on performance management
   - Shared accountability

3. Mutually Reinforcing Activities
   - Differentiated approaches
   - Coordination through joint plan of action

4. Continuous Communication
   - Consistent and open communication
   - Focus on building trust

5. Backbone Support
   - Separate organization(s) with staff
   - Resources and skills to convene and coordinate participating organizations

Source: Channeling Change: Making Collective Impact Work, 2012; FSG Interviews
Denver’s Collective Impact Group to Address Opioids and Other Substances

Common Agenda and Shared Metrics: Prevent Substance (Mis)use, Improve Treatment Access & Retention, Reduce Harm

**Strategic Guidance & Support**
- Exec. Group
- Leadership Committee (LCCI)

**Partner Driven Action**
- Education & Prevention
- Medication Safety & ALTOs
- Treatment on Demand
- Lived Experience Insight

**Ecosystem of Community Partners**
- Community partner (businesses, public agencies, nonprofits, residents)

**Backbone Support**
- Department of Public Health & Environment (DDPHE)

**Related Denver Groups**
- Data work group
- Crime Prevention & Control Commission (CPCC)
- Mental Health Panel
Library Involvement in Collective Impact and DDPHE Initiatives

• Co-chair of Leadership Committee
• Co-chair of Lived Experience Insight Action Team
• Most Action Teams and Committees meet monthly in libraries across Denver
• Hosted 2018 International Overdose Awareness Day event at Central Library
• Assistance in reaching people for focus groups regarding a Fentanyl Early Warning System

Photo: Mayor Michael B. Hancock addresses attendees during International Overdose Awareness Day, August 31, 2018. Photo campaign in background conducted by Harm Reduction Action Center.
Contact information

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More information

• Project website: oc.lc/opioid-crisis
• Join our Facebook group
• Sign up for WebJunction’s newsletter Crossroads to learn about future webinars and new content
• Information will also be shared through PLA channels
“Be open. Be open to people, to being human, because...[this] is a person, and they are suffering. And I guarantee there's a whole group of people connected to them that are suffering too. It's sometimes hard to see when you're dealing with it in the moment, but it's real.”

- Library Board Member
Questions and Discussion

Project website: oc.lc/opioid-crisis
NEXT STEPS
Next steps

- Virtual cross-sector discussions
- Call-to-action white paper
- WebJunction webinars
“So I hope ... that this study is just another piece of proof that this is something that we need to do.”

- Community Partner, Frontline Staff
References


