



Worcester Public Schools

The Opiate Epidemic: Impact on Students and Families

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March 17, 2016

Objectives

1. Identify the societal forces impacting the opiate epidemic
2. Recognize the many factors endangering our children
3. Become familiar with the key preventive strategies for adolescents
4. Be aware of local resources available to youth and families

Societal Forces

- ▶ Impact is felt by all, regardless of age, gender, income, race or culture
- ▶ Too soon to see the long-term effects on our young children of today
- ▶ What we do know:
 - ▶ Opioid overdose is one of the leading causes of death in MA
 - ▶ Significant increase in opiate-addicted newborns
 - ▶ Difficult to know if parents are on drugs, often until too late
 - ▶ Substantial increase in 911 calls for students experiencing behavioral health and emotional distress events
 - ▶ WPSs are home to > 200 children awaiting foster care placement

Drug-endangered Children

- ▶ 8.3 million children in the US live with at least 1 parent addicted to drugs or alcohol
- ▶ 19% of people suffering from opioid addiction and are in treatment facilities have children
- ▶ Risk for kids growing up in drug-homes
 - ▶ Neglect
 - ▶ Abuse
 - ▶ Isolation
 - ▶ Missed school
 - ▶ Death

Prevention is Key



- ▶ Investment of time, research, and funding
- ▶ Public awareness
- ▶ Education, Education, Education
 - ▶ Staff, students, parents, community
- ▶ Collaboration among community stakeholders

Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child



Education, Education, Education

- ▶ WDPH and other local coalitions and advocates
- ▶ Parents and community groups
- ▶ Comprehensive Drug Education Prevention Program
- ▶ Motivational Interviewing Training for all nurses
- ▶ Health Education curriculum



SBIRT: Substance Use Prevention Tool

- ▶ Screening
- ▶ Brief Intervention
- ▶ Referral to Treatment



Did you know: 1 in 5 HS students in MA were offered, sold or given illegal drugs in school and 1 in 4 currently use marijuana and alcohol



Stocking overdose drug in schools could save lives:

From the Boston Globe, the New York Times, and the Worcester Telegram and Gazette.....

Naloxone (Narcan) Availability in Schools

- ▶ An emergency overdose treatment currently available in 133 school districts
- ▶ Available to anyone who needs it: student, parent, staff
- ▶ All WPS nurses have received training on administration
- ▶ Increase awareness and public understanding



“You may choose to look the other way
but you can never again say that you did
not know.”

William Wilberforce

Thank you!

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