CARE WITHOUT JUDGMENT: OVERDOSE PREVENTION AND RESOURCE CONNECTION

24TH ANNUAL NEW YORK SUPPORTIVE HOUSING CONFERENCE

AGENDA

- Welcome & Introductions
- Principles of Harm Reduction
- NYC DOHMH Presentation
- CUCS Presentation
- Breakout Group Discussions
- Report Back
- Audience Q&A

COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

- One Mic Rule
- Use Person First Language
- Oops Ouch
- If anyone gets triggered, let us know

Descriptive Summary of Overdose Deaths in Supportive Housing Programs, NYC, 2024

1 in 10

overdose deaths occurred in a supportive housing program

NYC Neighborhoods with higher #OD supportive housing

South Bronx
Chelsea-Clinton
East New York

Over 1 in 4

overdose deaths in supportive housing occurred among Black Males ages 55+

80%

involved an opioid

Other common substances:

cocaine, 67%
alcohol, 42%

Source: NYC Office of Chief Medical Examiner and NYC Health Department, 2024
Data for 2024 are provisional and subject to change.

NYC Health

Overview of Resources Menu for Supportive Housing

Diang Severino, Senior Field Responder
Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Use (BADU)
New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYC Health Department

NYC Health

What is the Rapid Assessment and Response (RAR) Team?

Researchers and public health educators use real-time surveillance data to respond to communities experiencing increases in overdoses or related concerns

Mixed-methods community assessments are utilized to guide new interventions and vary by investigation

Not formal research studies – results are not meant to be generalizable. Typically considered public health surveillance

Initiatives include community education, overdose prevention training, data dissemination, and coalition building

How RAR Supports Supportive Housing Sites

RAR works with sites experiencing:

- Increases in fatal or non-fatal overdoses
- Public drug use in shared spaces
- Syringe litter and safety concerns
- Gaps in access to harm reduction or treatment services

RAR provides:

- Tailored workplans developed with site staff
- Staff trainings (overdose prevention and harm reduction)
- On-site outreach and tenant engagement
- Naloxone, fentanyl test strips, and educational materials
- Guidance on environmental strategies (communal naloxone, sharps disposal, signage)
- Connections to community partners and care services

Purpose of the Resource Guide

This guide equips supportive housing providers, staff, and residents with evidence-based harm reduction strategies to help prevent overdoses and enhance safety. It promotes the use of naloxone, fentanyl test strips, mental health resources, facility safety upgrades, and community partnerships.

The goal is to empower housing staff to:

Reduce overdose risks

Educate and train residents

Foster a culture of care and harm reduction

Connect with life-saving services and tools

NYC Health

Guide Overview: What's Inside?

- Recommendations to reduce overdose risk
- Facility safety and program enhancements
- Education and staff/resident trainings
- Key partnerships and referrals
- Health education materials
- Appendices with practical tools and flyers

Let’s Dive into the Resource Guide

Go to nyc.gov/alcoholanddrugs, click on the ‘Providers’ tab, and scroll down to the ‘Overdose Prevention and Response’ section. Click on “Overdose Prevention Resource Guide for Supportive Housing”.

Recommendations to Reduce Overdose Risk

Communal Naloxone

Stock naloxone in shared spaces, stored like a first aid kit or AED so anyone can grab it during an overdose

Overdose Prevention Programs

Register with New York State to order free rescue kits and train staff to give out naloxone on site

Overdose Prevention Hotlines

Enable unit phones to reach Never Use Alone and SafeSpot, and post the numbers throughout the building

Facility Safety and Program Enhancements

Accessibility

Install outward-opening doors in bathrooms and bedrooms so staff can reach someone who collapses

Card-Swipe Monitoring

Track high-risk tenants' swipes to flag inactivity and prompt wellness checks, framed as a safety tool, not surveillance

Safety Sensor Systems

Offer medical alert buttons, pull cords, and sensors for after-hours response, kept voluntary and private

Second-Tier Syringe Exchange

Become an STSEP to provide sterile syringes, naloxone, and fentanyl test strips on site

Education and Trainings

Overdose Safety Planning

Train staff to help residents build personal overdose safety plans, a one-hour session in English and Spanish

Naloxone and Test Strip Trainings

Free virtual trainings on reversing overdoses with naloxone and using and dispensing fentanyl test strips

Mental Health Resilience Workshops

Eight-hour certification teaching staff and residents to spot and respond to mental health and substance use crises

Partnerships and Referral Networks

Syringe Service Programs

Sterile syringes, safer-use supplies, safe disposal, naloxone, and testing, plus links to care

Health Care and Treatment

Medication treatment with buprenorphine and methadone, primary care, and case management

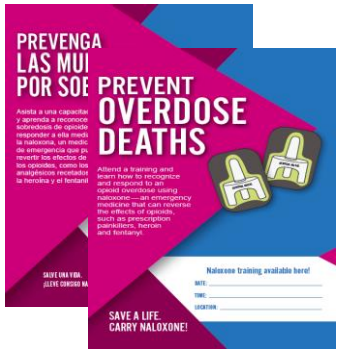
Harm Reduction Initiatives

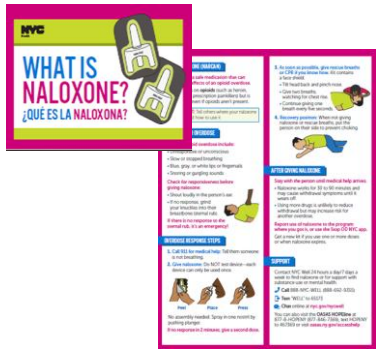
Naloxone, fentanyl and xylazine test strips, response training, and fast linkage to care

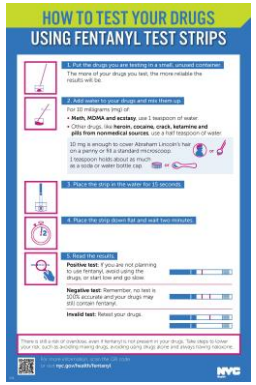
MATTERS Network

Rapid referrals for opioid use disorder treatment, plus medication vouchers and transportation help

Health Education Materials







What's Available

Free, multilingual booklets, palm cards, flyers, fact sheets, and posters on overdose prevention and harm reduction

How to Order

Download PDFs at nyc.gov/health or call 311 for printed copies, giving the title, quantity, and language

Key Topics

Naloxone, fentanyl test strips, overdose safety planning, syringe services, buprenorphine, and xylazine

NYC Health + Hospitals Substance Use Services

Virtual ExpressCare

24/7 telehealth with brief counseling, crisis support, and bridging buprenorphine

Opioid Treatment Programs

Methadone and buprenorphine with full wraparound care for opioid use disorder

Outpatient and OBAT

Person-centered treatment and primary-care-based buprenorphine or naltrexone

Refer by Borough

Use the provider list in the guide to connect residents to the nearest site

Naloxone Access and Recommendations for Implementing Communal Naloxone in Supportive Housing

Ian McHale, Director of Overdose Education and Naloxone Distribution
Sara Atlas, Technical Assistance Manager
Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Use (BADU)
New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYC Health Department)

NYC Health

Opioid Overdose Prevention Programs (OOPPs)

Any programmatic entity which is certified to give out naloxone, a life-saving medication that can be safely administered to reverse the effects of an opioid overdose

OOPPs staff receive training on how to dispense (train and give out) naloxone.

Once trained, staff can provide quick naloxone trainings in a variety of settings and contexts, such as 1:1 meetings, group setting, and outreach encounters

Naloxone distribution can be easily added to existing workflows

OOPPs can receive free naloxone, fentanyl test strips, training supplies, technical assistance (TA), and educational resources from NYC DOHMH for distribution

Communal Naloxone Recommendation

DOHMH recommends communal naloxone to be available in all supportive housing sites in NYC by end of 2026

Support is available for implementation

Naloxone Access:

Providing resources to become or partner with an OOPP

Best practices for communal naloxone implementation

Communal Naloxone Recommendation

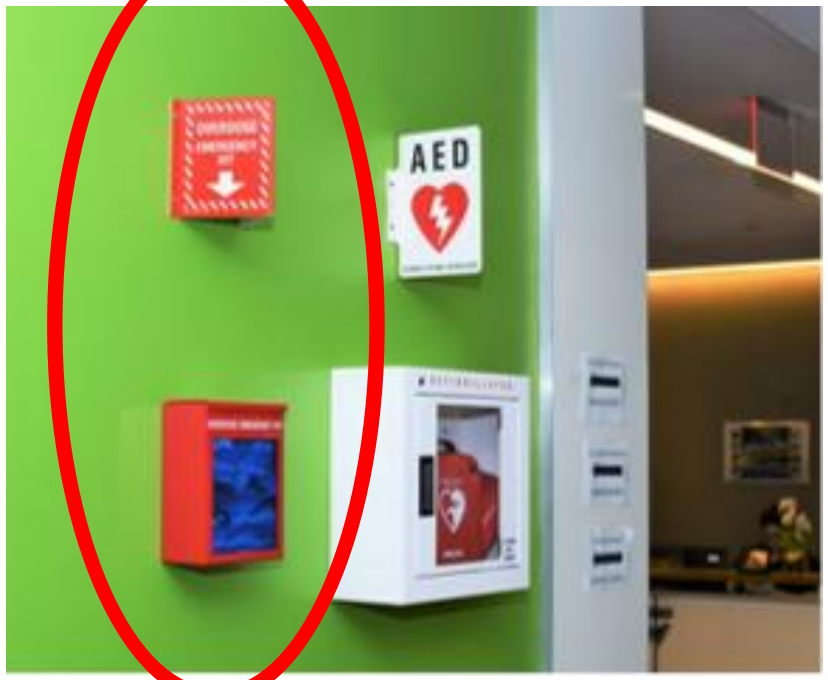
Communal naloxone refers to naloxone that is stored in an easily accessible location to be used in case of an opioid overdose

Communal naloxone kits are distinct from a personal/individual kit that one might receive through an OOPP (i.e., "personal kit")

Communal naloxone kits can be stored in a variety of ways, including but not limited to behind the front desk of a building, co-located with AEDs or first aid kits, etc.

Communal Naloxone Examples

Behind the Front Desk of a Building



Co-located with AED; inside metal box attached to wall

Co-located with first aid kit

NYC Health

Communal Naloxone Considerations

Communal naloxone kits should be stored in a 24/7 accessible location

They should not be locked up

It should be accessible for anyone to use in the case of an opioid overdose

Everyone in the building/premises should know where the kit is located

Information and signage on how to use naloxone should also be posted nearby

All employees should be trained in how to use naloxone to respond to an overdose, but they do not need to carry their own kit

Trainings can be provided to all staff via brief videos, materials, or in group trainings

NYC Health

Communal Naloxone Resources

Communal naloxone poster (English and Spanish)

Available via 311 or online download

Communal naloxone implementation guidance document, which will be shared via email

YouTube videos (English, Spanish, and Russian)

Naloxone Inserts available in
English | Español | Русский | 繁體中文 | 简体中文 | Kreyòl ayisyen | 한국어 | বাংলা | Italiano | Polski | | العربية Français | اردو | ייִדיש

NYC Health

Next Steps and Timeline

June:

TA Team will provide follow up information and resources to shared to support naloxone access and communal naloxone implementation

June - December:

TA Team will follow up with supportive housing programs to discuss naloxone access options and logistics for implementing communal naloxone

OENDU TA Team will provide ongoing support

We Are Here to Help!

We will be reaching out to all programs this year.

If you are interested in learning more about becoming an OOPP or getting started with implementing communal naloxone, please reach out to naloxone@health.nyc.gov

Q&A

We welcome your questions, reflections, and feedback!

Resource Guide for supportive housing

Naloxone access

Recommendations for Implementing Communal Naloxone in Supportive Housing

Overdose Safety Planning Training

Interested? Scan the QR code to complete the interest form. A member of our team will follow up with upcoming virtual training dates.

Download the Resource Guide:

24TH ANNUAL NEW YORK SUPPORTIVE HOUSING CONFERENCE

CENTER FOR URBAN COMMUNITY SERVICES

Opioid Overdose Response at 90 Sands Street

A structured program response to an increase in opioid-related deaths — building safety, access to services, and community connection.

CUCS CENTER FOR URBAN COMMUNITY SERVICES

Housing. Healing. Hope.

About CUCS

The Center for Urban Community Services (CUCS) **helps people rise from poverty, exit homelessness, and be healthy.**

- Develops affordable housing and provides programs linking housing, healthcare, and social services for homeless, formerly homeless, and low-income New Yorkers.
- Flexible, low-barrier services including: homeless outreach, transitional shelters, permanent supportive housing, Intensive Mobile Treatment Teams, Supported Employment, and benefits assistance.
- Embeds primary care, mental health, nursing, and occupational therapy through affiliate Janian Medical Care, PC.
- Training Institute delivers evidence-based trainings to human service providers, legal professionals, and healthcare workers locally and nationally.

50,000+

people served across
CUCS programs each year

Programs Include

- Homeless Outreach
- Permanent Supportive Housing
- Intensive Mobile Treatment
- Supported Employment
- Janian Medical Care (affiliate)

About 90 Sands Street

- **Ownership & Services**

  Owned and operated by Breaking Ground; on-site services provided by CUCS

- **Building History**

  Former Jehovah's Witness hotel, converted to supportive housing

- **Opened**

  Fall 2022 — moved 80 individuals into units in the first week

- **Total Units**

  491 total units · 305 NYC 15/15 supportive housing units

- **NYC 15/15 Eligibility**

  Chronically homeless individuals and families with serious mental illness, substance use disorder, or both

- **Streamlined Referrals**

  Piloted direct referrals from street outreach and transitional housing — cut placement time by ~2 months

CUCS's Permanent Housing Framework

Housing First

Tenants are housed without preconditions. Stability comes before treatment requirements, removing barriers to entry and care.

Harm Reduction

On-site case management and clinical services designed to meet people where they are, reducing risk without demanding abstinence.

Integrated Health Care

On-site primary care and psychiatric services through Janian Medical Care, embedded within the housing program.

Relationship-Centered

Healing starts in relationship. Staff build trust with tenants over time, enabling engagement even with the most complex needs.

The Opioid Crisis: NYC Context & 90 Sands

3,046

Overdose deaths in NYC in 2023

80%

of deaths involved fentanyl

10.4%

of deaths in SRO / supportive housing (↑ from 7.2% in 2020)

93.7

deaths per 100K in very high poverty neighborhoods

Source: NYC DOHMH Epi Data Brief No. 142, October 2024 (2023 provisional data)

March 2023

First overdose-related death at 90 Sands

Followed by a cluster of overdose-related deaths.

This moment prompted CUCS and Breaking Ground to launch a comprehensive Opioid Overdose Action Plan — partnered with DOHMH and the Rapid Assessment and Response (RAR) Team.

- 69% of all NYC overdose deaths occurred in a residence
- SRO/supportive housing deaths rose from 7.2% (2020) to 10.4% (2023)
- Most deaths happen alone — isolation is a critical risk factor

- 80% of permanent supportive housing overdose deaths involved an opioid – fentanyl most prevalent
- 59% of opioid-related deaths also involve cocaine – highlighting attention needed to polysubstance use
- 31% of opioid deaths involved xylazine

- Expansion of access to naloxone is critical, but not exclusive
- Education around the risks of xylazine, polysubstance use and fentanyl
- Education and access to drug-checking, peer support, and safety planning to not use alone

Source: NYC DOHMH Epi Data Brief No. 142, October 2024 (provisional 2023 data)

Partnership with DOHMH and Rapid Assessment and Response Team (RAR)

Canvass Planning

RAR met the BG and CUCS teams to tour the building and learn about the site and residents to inform a canvassing plan and coordination with clinical service team

Neighborhood Outreach

RAR deployed for harm reduction engagement in the surrounding neighborhood and to understand drug use landscape and overdose risk in the area

Tenant Engagement

RAR facilitated tabling in the building lobby for tenant engagement around harm reduction resources

Door-to-Door Outreach

RAR staff knock on every resident's door to share information about naloxone, fentanyl test strips, and harm reduction resources

OD Safety Planning

RAR staff provided an overdose safety planning session with CUCS staff, including poster resources for tenant education

Resources Shared by RAR

Fentanyl Test Strips: mattersnetwork.org/request-test-strips
Syringe Services (nearest): VOCAL-NY (vocal-ny.org/our-services)
Fit Packs: Personal fit packs/syringe disposal containers provided directly to the site
Never Use Alone Hotline: RAR assisted with information gathering to consider the needs of the population
Community Linkages: Coordinated introduction between Center for Community Alternatives (CCA) and CUCS at 90 Sands to foster a strategic partnership

Opioid Overdose Action Plan

Assessment & Service Planning

Ensured integration of substance use engagement and safety planning through assessments and service plans, with supervisory oversight

Critical Time Intervention

Identified high risk individuals, increased outreach protocols (up to daily), daily monitoring of building access data to inform wellness checks

Staff Training and Support

Substance use training, Naloxone training, Fentanyl test strips training, resource information, support in weekly supervisions

Building Community & Reducing Isolation

Socialization groups, tenant community meetings, posting of information on floors and in monthly newsletter

Access to Resources

Naloxone & fentanyl strips, safe use education and resources, Never Use Alone hotline access

Continuing the Work Through Clinical Services

Normalize the Discussion

- Raise substance use regularly; normalize conversation to reduce stigma
- Start where people are; resist jumping to solutions or treatment
- Use a trauma-informed lens; approach with compassion and unconditional positive regard

Routine offer of resources

- Review overdose safety plan; encourage never use alone and awareness of supply source
- Provide safe use supplies consistently

Staying Present

- Stay consistent in outreach and engagement
- Engage on all aspects of life, not just substance use and overdose risk

Continuing Work through Staff Development

Training

- Core curriculum training through the CUCS Institute, including Harm Reduction and Motivational Interviewing
- Multidisciplinary case conferences and workshops for hands-on, coordinated learning
- All Staff training in Naloxone administration upon hire, with a minimum of annual re-training

Support

- Address burnout, compassion fatigue, and personal stigma through structured support in weekly supervision and staff meetings
- Ensure easy access to referral and resource information

Processing Loss

- Prioritize team debriefs following loss of life
- Outsourcing grief support when needed
- Burnout prevention embedded in supervision and team culture
- Create space for collective grief through memorials and celebrations of life

Key Achievements

- ✓ Narcan kits installed on every residential floor; all staff trained in Narcan administration, including security; tenant group and individual trainings offered
- ✓ Fentanyl test strips made accessible for distribution by on-site staff and all staff trained in use of fentanyl test strips for tenant education
- ✓ Strategic partnership with local substance use treatment program (Center for Community Alternatives) established with weekly tabling in the building lobby to highlight and directly engage resources
- ✓ Strategic partnership with VOCAL NY, coordinating access to safe use resources
- ✓ Access to the Never Use Alone hotline via unit phones paired with tenant education and awareness
- ✓ Increased socialization opportunities and tenant service events to reduce isolation and build community
- ✓ On-site access to on-site medication-assisted treatment through Janian medical and psychiatric services
- ✓ Vulnerable tenant list developed with consistent wellness check protocols
- ✓ Targeted maintenance of a 1:15 caseload ratio
- ✓ Tenant information on building trends and resources distributed via newsletter and community postings, additional to individualized engagement
- ✓ Tenant community meetings held monthly (at minimum)
- ✓ Implementation of Overdose Safety Planning Worksheet as an engagement tool

Breakout Discussion Questions

Based on the interventions outlined in this presentations (handout for reference):

- What have you already implemented from these interventions?
- What do you think you can implement immediately?
- What could work in the long run?
- What are barriers to getting these implemented?