



**Care Massachusetts
The Opioid Abatement
Partnership**

Care Massachusetts Core Training and Technical Assistance Team



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Background: Care Massachusetts

Care Massachusetts is working collaboratively with cities and towns across the state to take action to end the overdose crisis.

We provide resources and technical assistance with:

- Connecting municipalities with the people most impacted by the overdose crisis
- Promoting the selection and implementation of proven public health strategies
- Educating the public on the source and purpose of the funds
- Facilitating collaboration across municipalities



OFFICE HOURS

Strategies to Involve People Who Use Drugs in Opioid Abatement Fund Utilization

02/01/2024



Objectives for today's office hours:

1. Understand why it is critical to include people who use drugs in opioid abatement decision making
2. Learn about approaches for engaging with people who use drugs in a way that keeps them safe and empowers them
3. Identify ways to prioritize the voices of people who use drugs



PANELISTS



Caty Simon



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Nothing about us, without us.



CAUTION
WET FLOOR



ATTENTION
PLANCHER
MOUILLE

Why it is essential to include people who use drugs in opioid abatement decision making?



Takeaways: Why Engage People Who Use Drugs in Opioid Abatement Fund Planning and Decision Making?

- The [Massachusetts state subdivision agreement for statewide opioid settlements](#) strongly emphasizes input from those directly affected by the opioid epidemic
- Ensuring that people most affected by the opioid overdose crisis have an active role will maximize the impact of your work
- People who are actively using drugs have been directly affected by the opioid epidemic and are at highest risk of fatal opioid overdose
- Involving people who are using drugs from the very beginning will set the stage for their meaningful and thoughtful involvement throughout



What are some approaches for engaging with people who use drugs in a way that protects their well-being?



Takeaways: Tools to Engage People Who Use Drugs

- Contact existing organizations led by people who use drugs, other advocacy groups, substance use disorder (SUD) coalitions, service providers, Massachusetts [Peer Recovery Support Centers](#), [Safe Syringe programs](#), etc.
- Use different types or engagement events and tools (interviews, surveys, targeted community forums, in-person/virtual options etc.)
- Use multiple different types of incentives for engagement (e.g., stipends + travel supports + food/beverages at events etc.)



What are some ways to prioritize the voices of people who use drugs among those who have more power?



Takeaways: Facilitating Inclusive Engagement

- Recognize people with lived/living experience often have years of experience as community organizers in policy, research, direct service spaces, and informal mutual aid
- Validate experiences & emphasise the importance of the voice of people who are using drugs
- Offer ongoing, meaningful opportunities for engagement
- Follow-up to report back on how feedback was incorporated (or not) into funding decisions and why
- Involving people who use drugs in project/program design means it's more likely to be successful in addressing the needs of community members



Resources

- [MA Department of Public Health Harm Reduction Presentation](#)
- [Grayken Center Harm Reduction Training](#)
- [Peer Recovery Support Centers](#)
- [Safe Syringe programs](#)
- [Community Coalition Practice Guide](#)
- [Continuum of Care Guide](#)
- [MOAR](#)
- [Safety First Harm-Reduction Based Drug Intervention Curriculum](#)
- [Tapestry Health](#)
- [Young Women's Empowerment Project](#)



Questions?

Do you have any questions for us?

Do you have tips, ideas, or lessons learned that we have not discussed today?



NEXT STEPS

❑ **Upcoming Office Hours:**

- Thursday, February 15 at 2PM: Changes in Legislation Related to Stabilization Funds
- Thursday, February 29 at 2PM: How to Engage Family Members of People Who Use Drugs in Planning Efforts

Note that are now unique registration links for each event

❑ **[Previous Office Hours slides and recordings](#)**

❑ **[Request individualized technical assistance](#)**

❑ **Sign up for our [listserv](#)**

❑ **Check out the [municipal dashboard](#)**



FEEDBACK SURVEY

Please take a couple minutes to respond to the anonymous feedback survey after the call ends



THANK YOU!

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