Opioid Epidemic and Planning

What can planners do to address the greatest community crisis of today?
Convening a Conversation

Planners addressing the crisis is an emerging issue.

There is a lot of expertise in the room and we are starting this conversation to learn from each other on this topic and brainstorm possible solutions.

You will not be hearing us talk as experts on the topic.

We will all be working to identify solutions and strategies we can take back to our communities.
Agenda

- Understanding the opioid crisis through the Planning Context
- Key terms
- Tools
- Introduction to the roundtable activity
Planning
Context
Planning Link to the Opioid Epidemic

As planners we have seen opioid issues strike our communities, but what skills do we have to bring to solving this issue?

With such an immediate crisis, planning’s long-term solutions can be hard to include in the process, but there are skills of planning that can be of great use.
Mortality in the United States

NOTES: Deaths are classified using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision. Drug-poisoning (overdose) deaths are identified using underlying cause-of-death codes X40–X44, X60–X64, X85, and Y10–Y14. Access data table for Figure 3 at: https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db294_table.pdf#3.
Statewide Planning Director’s Survey
Statewide Planning Director’s Survey

Opinion of Community Character

- Urban: 18 (58.1%)
- Suburban: 15 (48.4%)
- Rural: 29 (93.5%)
- Growing: 12 (38.7%)
- Shrinking: 12 (38.7%)
- Stable: 4 (12.9%)
Pressing Issues v. What Planners Believe they Can Change

- Substance Abuse
- Obesity
- Increasing Physical Activity
- Elderly Care/ Aging Population
- Traffic Safety
- Tick Borne Diseases
- Access to Healthy Food
- Water Quality
- Access to Health Care
- Health Inequalities
- Air Quality
- School Health
- Health In All Policies
- Stopping Smoking in Public Places
- Disease Control
- Ability to Grow Local Food
- Multi-Modal Transportation
- Housing-homelessness
- Healthy Housing
Historical Context

Protecting health, safety, and welfare is the basis of the planning profession and commonly used tools like zoning.
Planner as Interpreter

Planners are used to translating complex topics to the public and elected officials.

Planners are also skilled at analyzing public input and available data sources in a way that is useful to elected officials and technical expert.
Planner as Convener

Planners have networks including a wide variety of fields (e.g., elected officials, zoning hearing boards, planning commissions) that have a role to play in solving the opioid crisis.
Keep Going

There isn’t much research that has been done with planning’s role. There will be new and innovative ways to get involved. Planners will also make mistakes and learn from them.
Key Terms
Stigma and Language

Terms like addict, substance abuser, and clean have strong connotations and place all of the burden on the affected individuals.

The language used reinforced the idea that individuals are merely lacking the willpower to quit.

Planners can play a role in destigmatizing those affected by encouraging and using appropriate language.
Brain Development

Upstream factors

Genetics, mental health disorders, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), Trauma, Early substance abuse

Opioids work to rewire brain architecture to deaden the prefrontal cortex and activate pleasure centers. This is like cutting the brakes on your car.
Mental Health Link

We weren’t able to find studies directly involving planning and the opioid epidemic.

The link between planning priorities like promoting active transportation and green space and mental health improvements have been shown.

A link between environmental stressors and opioid use has also been shown.
Tools
**INDIVIDUAL**

Individual with Opioid Use Disorder

- Harm Reduction & Prevention
- Access to Treatment

**COMMUNITY IMPACT**

Family Members
Neighbors & Community
Physical Environment
Harm Reduction & Prevention

Naloxone

Needle Exchange

Safe Injection Sites

Medical Disposal Units
Harm Reduction & Prevention

Behavioral Health Support

Screening and Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (Sbirt)

Diversion to Treatment or Restorative Justice

Urban Design and Improved Mental Health
Access to Treatment

Identification Cards to Get Treatment

Destigmatize Opioid Use Disorder & its Treatment

Expanded Treatment Facilities

Transit Options to Treatment Facilities

Housing Stability
Community Impacts

Improved Police Relations

Alternatives to Drug Dealing

Job Programs that Target People in Drug Trade & Returning Citizens

NAR-anon Programs

Trauma Informed Training in Schools - Access to Social Workers
Community Impacts

Clean & Green Vacant Lots

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design
Opioid Crisis Task Forces

Many communities have found Opioid Task Forces that planners can join.

If your community doesn’t have one, consider being the impetus of starting one.
Introduction to the Exercise
Roundtable Exercise

You will put yourself in the shoes of someone in a community and provide the tools that they have available to a public forum to address the opioid crisis.

Tables are divided into Rural, Suburban, and Urban communities.
Public Forum

The Elected Officials have convened a public forum to discuss how opioids have been affecting your community. The goal is to come up with a strategy for addressing the crisis in your community.
Your Role

Each person will select a role to play. Each person will have a different perspective and tools to bring to help solve this crisis in their community.

Consider how your role would act.

- NIMBY Neighbor
- Family Member affected by crisis
- Elected Official
- Planning Director/Planner
- Facility Developer/Operator
- Hospital Emergency Department
- School Administrator
- Police Chief
Measuring Success

Addressing the opioid epidemic is an issue that has eluded communities around the country, so there is no expectation that you solve the crisis for your community.

The exercise aims to put you in the shoes of different types of community members to create empathies for their point of view. It also hopes to build understanding of tools that may be available to different types of community members.

Potential Resources/Tools

- Warm Hand-Off Process
- Naloxone (Narcan) Training
- In-Patient Treatment
- Out-Patient Substance Abuse Counseling
- Medication Assisted Treatment
- Prevention Programs
- Youth Mentoring Programs (Big Brothers Big Sisters/Big Buddies/Bigs in Blue)
- Forensic Case Management
- Drug Task Force/Coalition
- Community Awareness/Support Groups
- Rx Take Back Events
- Medication Disposal Units
- Social Workers in Schools
- Access to Transportation
- Employment/Entrepreneurship Opportunities
- Housing